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# From Neolithic Naturalness to *Tristes Tropiques*

## The Emergence of Lévi-Strauss's New Humanism

*Albert Doja*

**C**RITIQUES OF Lévi-Strauss's anthropology are bound up with the recent defence of humanism, and of modernity more generally, advanced by the intellectual trends that have dominated French thought since at least the 1960s. As structural anthropology focused on the unconscious structures that precede individual agency and resist historical contingency, Lévi-Strauss has been under attack on at least two broad fronts, which are apparently contradictory. From one side, the objections levelled by the Marxist humanism that was developed in different ways by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty in the middle of the 20th century aimed to show that the structural method remained closed, at least in principle, to questions of a moral or ethical nature. Lévi-Strauss was said instead to offer to intellectual thought only the horizon of anti-humanism (Ricoeur, 1969; Sartre, 1960). Meanwhile, from the other side, the intellectual heirs of Nietzsche and Heidegger, such as Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard, who proclaimed the death of subject and deconstructed the concepts of modern politics, make the reverse objection to Lévi-Strauss – that he is inextricably implicated in the discourse of modern subjectivist metaphysics, that they deem to be 'humanistic' (Derrida, 1967).

I have argued elsewhere how, in the course of anti-structural criticism, the main thrust of Lévi-Strauss's approach seems to have been lost, to the collective detriment of social sciences and anthropology (Doja, 2005, 2006a), and that his actual theoretical and epistemological contribution to general knowledge, including his critique of ethnocentrism, are more often

than not misconstrued (Doja, 2006b, 2006c). In this article it is my purpose to argue that, above all, the Rousseauian inspiration and the new humanism of structural anthropology as a human science are rarely appreciated, despite the fact that they could lay strong claim to having mapped the philosophical parameters of an increasing preoccupation with issues of political concern and engagement within anthropology in the postcolonial era.

Changes in both the political and intellectual climate over the last 20 years or so have made possible a warmer reception of liberal and humanist ideas in France. The collapse of communism in the Eastern bloc and the dismantling of the famous 'bloc' of French historians and politicians who monopolized the interpretation of the Revolution have permitted new interpretations and appropriations of previous thinkers, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the philosopher most closely associated with the Revolution. The liberal and humanist appropriations of Rousseau are actually the most striking indication of the recent shift in contemporary French political thought (see Scott and Zaretsky, 2003). However, long before the French revival of liberal and humanist thought, Lévi-Strauss already provides an illuminating example of anticipation – though often unacknowledged and even more often misconstrued – of the choice of Rousseau as an inspiration and source of humanism for the shift toward both natural-rights republicanism (Ferry and Renaut, 1985) and critical humanism (Todorov, 1989), as well as towards an ecological humanism and a systems-inspired environmentalism that avoid the problematic dualism of nature and humanity by questioning sceptically the 'nature of nature' (Morin, 1977) and the 'natural contract' (Serres, 1990) in terms of how we understand both the world and ourselves.

Rather than attempting to reintegrate man into nature by way of a new ethic (one that asks us to respect the 'intrinsic value' of natural things), contemporary French theorists favour the sceptical humanism of Montaigne and Rousseau. It is precisely the sceptical turn of mind that makes these thinkers such potent critics of what often dehumanizes our existence: vain pretensions to social superiority, fanaticism, and disregard of the spiritual consequences of our technical innovations (see Whiteside, 2002). Likewise, the strategic importance of Lévi-Strauss's critique of ethnocentrism was that it already put into question the objectivity and universality of Western history. He interrogated the notion of progress and relativized the achievements of Western science and technology from the point of view of societies that function as machines for the suppression of time and disorder at the level of history and social relations. Ahead of the historians and philosophers of Sartrean cast, who were unable to transcend a particular and situated conceptual universe, the structural anthropologist's stance is a more detached and objective perspective on the range and nature of human experience.

It is undeniable that Lévi-Strauss always obstinately defended the definition of anthropology as a science of the universal structures of human mind. However, he explicitly related this scientific project and the

epistemological problem of anthropology to the political question of the universality of human nature and the ideological movement of humanism. Lévi-Strauss not only claimed anthropology to be one of the most scientific of the human sciences, but as Johnson (2003: 130) put it, also the most humane of the human sciences. Lévi-Strauss is concerned to show the inherent superiority of other forms of consciousness and structural anthropology is justified as a human science of non-Western cultures in light of their modern experience of alienation, in what amounts to an alternative form of humanism. This new humanism, which Lévi-Strauss aimed to extend 'to the measure of humanity' (1973b [1960]: 44 [Eng. 1977: 32]),<sup>1</sup> was intended to combine the ambition of scientific analysis with the imperative of a global awareness.

The effect of structural analysis as practised by Lévi-Strauss is to have widened the human field, making identity emerge from differences and the diversity of cultures. This is its most sympathetic aspect, and, with regard to this alone, it is not absurd that Lévi-Strauss could claim to have made an original contribution to humanism. Likewise, it is Lévi-Strauss's adroitness and talent to have been able to produce, not only the high science of *Mythologiques*, revealing the operation of the *Savage Mind*, but also the heroic quest of *Tristes Tropiques*, precisely evoking anthropology as both science and humanism, a knowledge that simultaneously brings to light the diagnosis of the disease of our civilization and its remedy.

### Rousseau's Legacy

A romantic impulse seems to provide the deepest source of animation for Lévi-Strauss's work from the start. Not only the foundation of his anthropological approach as a whole, but also his particular realizations, seem to be marked by a romantic conviction (Honneth, 1990: 144). Undoubtedly, the pervasive nostalgia for the time of 'true travels', like the lament over the disappearance of virgin spaces and the painful destruction of the organic connection between humans and nature in the modern world, link *Tristes Tropiques* to a romantic tradition initiated by Chateaubriand, to whom explicit reference is made (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 45 [Eng. 1973: 44]). Also the Rousseauist inspiration, whether acknowledged in the tenor of confession or firmly asserted, or sometimes even passed over in silence, marks Lévi-Strauss's work in all its major frames, which constantly call upon Rousseau's logic and his system of analysis (Desveaux, 1992; Duchet, 1984).

However, one cannot easily reduce *Tristes Tropiques* to a last embodiment of the romantic voyage. Certain commentators have already considered the issue related to the narrative of the voyage, in order to show that Lévi-Strauss breaks with the discourse which located ethnography in the wake of the earlier traveller's narrative (Debaene, 2002; Scobie, 1977). The constitution of the identity of ethnographer in opposition to the escapist figure of explorer, the demystification of the adventure and the guilty conscience of travel *littérateurs*, make *Tristes Tropiques* fit, above all, in a tradition that largely exceeds that of travel accounts.

Even the proximity with Rousseau shows what, after all, separates Lévi-Strauss from the romantic tradition, since in the end subjectivity is dissolved through the Pascalian resonances of the last pages of *Tristes Tropiques*, where ‘the self is not only hateful, there is no place for it between *us* and *nothing*’ (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 479 [Eng. 1973: 414]), while in the *L’Homme nu* (*The Naked Man*) there is a deeper concern to reduce the subject to what it ought to try to be, that is, ‘the insubstantial place or space where anonymous thought can develop’ (Lévi-Strauss, 1971: 559 [Eng. 1981: 625]).

It is the result of a consistent empathy which, unlike that of the romantics, is not simply the projection of a state of mind onto nature but rather, in the wake of Rousseau, an identification of mind with the sensory realm. It is probably the same thought-decentring and moral inspiration that animated both Rousseau and Lévi-Strauss, concerned with the union of what ‘the self-interests of politicians and philosophers are everywhere else bent on rendering incompatible: me and the other, my societies and other societies, nature and culture, the sensitive and the rational, humanity and life’ (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 55–6 [Eng. 1963: 43]).

Therefore, Lévi-Strauss can present the birth of social science as emerging from the spirit of Rousseauian romanticism, and Rousseau can be seen as the forerunner of modern anthropology in the sense that he anticipated both its scientific programme and its moral mission. This prepared the way not only for a dialogue with Rousseau but also for the lofty admiration for him reflected in *Tristes Tropiques*, where Rousseau is spoken of as ‘the most ethnographic of philosophers’:

Rousseau our master and brother, to whom we have behaved with such ingratitude but to whom every page of this book could have been dedicated, had the homage been worthy of his great memory. (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 451 [Eng. 1973: 390])

To understand the place of Rousseau within the history of ideas, it can be argued that Marx merely radicalized the eloquent condemnation of property in the *Second Discourse*,<sup>2</sup> while Kant’s influence on modern ethics arose from his transformation of Rousseau’s ‘general will’ into the ‘categorical imperative’. Moreover, Rousseau’s thought stands as a demystification of human origins, and as an attempt to remove from our self-awareness the sense of theological guilt associated with original sin. The *Second Discourse* was written a century before Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, yet Rousseau already took a resolutely evolutionary view of human nature. Increased attention has been paid to a number of the evolutionist implications of the *Second Discourse*, and the more ambitious of these studies have gone on to suggest that Rousseau anticipated modern developments in evolutionary psychology, socio-biology, primatology, ethology and so on (Horowitz, 1990; Masters, 1978; Moran, 1993; Wokler, 1978).

These are probably hasty connections that may only allow a partial and inventive, if not inaccurate, re-reading of Rousseau. In Lévi-Strauss’s

case, when he reaches out a brotherly hand to Rousseau across the centuries, he attenuates the links joining Rousseau to the other philosophers of his age, and makes him speak a language so individual that it may no longer correspond to historical reality (Jeannière, 1988: 64; Ryklin, 1978: 614). In other words, over-influenced by the problems that Lévi-Strauss himself has to face, Rousseau seems to have been abstracted from the history of ideas. Some would therefore find Lévi-Strauss 'extravagant' and 'irritating' (Link-Heer, 1986: 152), 'outrageous and univocal' (Duchet, 1984: 193), or even 'reactionary' (O'Hagan, 1978).

Primarily, Lévi-Strauss's most powerful affinity with Rousseau is spiritual and emotional. It is the passion, the solitude, the lonely mysticism in Rousseau that Lévi-Strauss most deeply cherishes and which provide his moral thrust (Luhmann, 1990). Both Rousseau and Lévi-Strauss seem to be thinkers concerned with the same paradox. While Rousseau regarded himself as a 'man of nature' obliged to live in a 'state of society', Lévi-Strauss sees himself as endowed with a 'neolithic intelligence' (1973a [1955]: 57 [Eng. 1973: 45]) that has prevented him from adapting himself to the conditions of intellectual production imposed by modern society, and has helped him to become an ethnographer.

Rousseau was a complex, conflicted thinker, contradictory, far-ranging, passionate in his beliefs but abstract in his insights, rejected by his contemporaries and often misunderstood by his successors. Now *Tristes Tropiques* is also an intensely solitary book, an internal, abstract meditation on the 20th-century drama of the travel-stained explorer. Lévi-Strauss would claim that the anthropologist 'eventually comes to feel at home nowhere' (1973a [1955]: 59 [Eng. 1973: 47]). Solitary subjectivity is the centre of his trade as he lives more consciously in chosen exile, self-condemned to walk the boundaries between his different worlds.

Rousseau believed that the circumstances of his life, his long period of solitude in the heart of nature, his whole contemplative life and his refusal to compromise with the ruling strata of society, which Marx called his 'moral tact' (Ryklin, 1978: 607), gave him a unique opportunity to discover what was artificial about social relationships. Similarly, Lévi-Strauss recalled having been socialized into an educational system that immersed aspiring philosophers in a suffocating, pseudo-Hegelian language. That is why, as a novice ethnographer, fresh from an abandoned career in philosophy, he ventured into the Brazilian back-country to search out a proverbial lost tribe, reputedly living apart from the press of modernity. No wonder, therefore, that Lévi-Strauss saw in Rousseau's work a theoretical foundation upon which to build an epistemology, and, with this framework, to declare an anthropologist, as Luhmann (1990: 396) put it, the only thinker qualified to understand the cultural blinkers that humans wear.

Rousseau aimed 'to determine exactly what precautions must be taken to ensure reliable observation in this field', while wondering 'what experiments would be necessary to produce knowledge of natural man, and by what means could these experiments be conducted within society' (1969

[1755]: 53–4 [Eng. 1984: 68]). The solution, which attracted both Durkheim and Lévi-Strauss, is the exhortation in the opening pages of the *Second Discourse*:

Let us begin by setting aside all the facts, because they do not affect the question. The kind of investigations we may enter into, in treating this subject, must not be taken as the pursuit of historical truths, but solely as hypothetical and conditional reasonings, better fitted to clarify the nature of things than to ascertain their actual origin; just like the hypotheses used every day by our physicists to explain the formation of the world. (Rousseau, 1969 [1755]: 62–3 [Eng. 1984: 78])

Needless to say, Rousseau never accepted what religion or any external authority ‘commands us to believe’. His assumption of ‘mankind abandoned to itself’ is undoubtedly reminiscent of the celebrated formula that rejected the assumption of God in the calculations of the new astronomy born of Kepler, Galileo and Newton. The ‘facts’ and ‘scholarly books’ that Rousseau invited us to set aside are thus especially those of which Holy Scriptures attested the historical truth. By calling them ‘facts’ Rousseau placated both the Christian establishment and the sciences, understood as crude empiricism, and claimed a status of experimental and deductive science for his own method of hypothesis and rational reconstruction.

Much more, the invitation to ‘set aside all the facts’ also leads us ‘rather to forget time and place’ and ‘be interested in man in general’ (Rousseau, 1969 [1755]: 63 [Eng. 1984: 78–9]), ‘to generalize the views and consider the abstract man’, in other words, to attach more importance to experimental and anthropological assumptions than to the analysis of particular events of history. ‘History has no use for Rousseau and quite legitimately he disregarded it’, as Durkheim (1953 [1918]: 117 [Eng. 1960: 67]) put it, who found in these words the key to his interpretation of Rousseau’s state of nature. Lévi-Strauss used the same words as the epigraph to his chapter on ‘social structure’ (1958a [1953a]: 303 [Eng. 1963: 277]), in which he is concerned to distinguish historical studies from structural analysis both in their methods and their objects, a theme to which he returns in his critique of Sartre in the *Savage Mind*’s chapter on ‘history and dialectics’ (1962a: 324–57 [Eng. 1969: 245–69]).

Rousseau summarized his method in a phrase that had a profound effect on Lévi-Strauss, as he repeatedly quotes it (1962a: 326–7 [Eng. 1969: 247]; 1962b: 47 [Eng. 1963: 35]) as one of the affirmations that makes of Rousseau the founder of anthropology: ‘When one wants to study men, one must look around oneself; but to study man one must first learn to look from afar; one must first see differences in order to discover characteristics’ (Rousseau, 1990 [1781]: ch. VIII, 89–90). The epigraph to the *Le Regard éloigné* (*The View from Afar*; Lévi-Strauss, 1983 [Eng. 1985]) is again taken from Rousseau: ‘The great mistake of Europeans is to always philosophize on the origins of things according to what happens at their home’ (Rousseau,

1990 [1781]: ch. VIII, 90). Like Rousseau, Lévi-Strauss's search is not after all for men, whom he doesn't much care for, as Geertz (1973: 356) put it, but for Man, with whom he is enthralled. For Lévi-Strauss the opposition between Man and men, like that between culture and cultures, between praxis and practices, or between reversible and irreversible times, corresponds to the difference between the subject of anthropology and the subject of history, and is one of the bastions of structural anthropology against empiricism and historicism.

Thus Rousseau must have already distinguished, on the theoretical plane, 'the object proper of the ethnologist from that of the moralist and the historian' (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 47 [Eng. 1963: 35]). It is a question of studying man and not men, most remote from oneself and not in the proximity of a culture which erases differences. In other words, the opposition between the state of nature and the state of society allowed Rousseau to introduce a partition. History stops where a new world springs, 'covered with peoples of whom we know only the names' and of whom we must write 'the natural, moral and political history' (Rousseau, 1969 [1755]: 143–4 [Eng. 1984: 160–1]). Foreign to our world, they do not form lesser societies of men who mean so much for the constitution of a science of man in general.

Lévi-Strauss's project, the supreme Rousseauist temptation acknowledged in *Tristes Tropiques*, was to go into the Amerindian forest, 'to reach the extreme limits of the savage', among 'charming Indians' ignored by all, whom one reaches 'after an enchanting trip' (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 383 [Eng. 1973: 332–3]). However, it is from the disappointment of this voyage that the ambitious project of the *Mythologiques* cycle could be born. To the refused language of the ultimate savages will be opposed the uninterrupted discourse of myths, which is analytically proposed to be – in its logical coherence – revealing of the human mind.

Already, in the case of Rousseau, the ideal of an absolute communication, a total transparency between individuals, came up against a perplexing difficulty. If the senses opened to a generalized compassion between animated beings of creation, the introduction of an order, whether related to the articulated language or to the body politic, was realized at the price of a separation and discontinuity. The compassion became exchange, and an interested one at that, even though ultimately the interest of all would subsume that of individuals. The transitivity of sensitivities is lost to the benefit of the sudden appearance of the sign, a resolutely arbitrary linguistic or symbolic entity, which is confined by a multiplicity of codes, in other words, of appearance systems (Desveaux, 1992: 385). Now one can at most establish equivalences between distinct codes, and try a general convertibility of codes to one another. This is exactly what the myths do, according to Lévi-Strauss, ad infinitum explaining and speculating on the origin, the discontinuity, and the passage from the state of nature to the state of culture.

Lévi-Strauss returns time and time again to the thinker whom he hails as the 'founder of the sciences of man', who 'did not restrict himself

to anticipating ethnology: he founded it' (1962b: 46 [Eng. 1963: 35]). To Rousseau we owe the merit of having 'conceived, willed and announced' anthropology a whole century before it made its appearance. In Lévi-Strauss's vision:

. . . the *Discourse on the origins and foundations of inequality among men* is without a doubt the first anthropological treatise in French literature. In almost modern terms, Rousseau posed the central problem of anthropology, namely, the passage from nature to culture. (Lévi-Strauss, 1973c [1962]: 146 [Eng. 1977: 99])

For Rousseau, the natural law is spontaneously lived by natural man, but, once the state of nature is lost, this spontaneity will disappear. It is by means of reasoning that the rules of morality will be formulated in order to correct the error to which man is now exposed. Though reasonable motivations and moral requirements aim at the same goal as the spontaneous movement of nature, that is, self-conservation and respect for others, and the moral law does not contradict natural law by any means, it must nevertheless be built 'on other foundations'. The civilized man cannot live according to natural law. He must endeavour to faithfully follow its rules in a relation of convergence or analogy. Thus, in Rousseau's conception, in a striking similarity with what Hegel will name *Aufhebung*, the law has not changed in its end but in its source.

The object of this *Discourse* is exactly to pinpoint that moment in the progress of things when, with right succeeding violence, nature was subjected to the law. (Rousseau, 1969 [1755]: 62 [Eng. 1984: 77])

Kant already granted a great importance to Rousseau's insight regarding the possibility of a reconciliation of nature and culture by means of 'practical reason', as an alternative source in a world that needs the rules of natural law but cannot derive that law from nature (Cassirer, 1954). Man is not a simple individual, just as humanity is not a series of individuals who emerge at the end of animal series. The relationship to nature is not overwhelmed with the evolution of primates and the examination of their biological characteristics leading to humanization, for man emerges into a cultural realm which is separated from the natural realm. It is a new world which emerges from another world, a world of mind which is undoubtedly produced by nature and in which everyone remains related to nature, but, in Lévi-Strauss's conception, humanity is indicated as a 'mass of unconscious rules' which allow the appearance of the individual, whereas the subject of humanism is diluted into the unconscious, of which it is nothing more than a partial and deformed echo. It is therefore important for Lévi-Strauss to 'refer to this uninvited guest which has been present beside us and which is the human mind' (1958b [1953]: 81 [Eng. 1963: 71]). It is to this paradoxical guest, present without being representable, that philosophers of conscience seem to have difficulty in leaving a place, whereas the task of anthropology is to find its universal rules and to explore their limits.

One may state, however, that Rousseau already referred to this unconscious 'human mind' that will make it possible for anthropological science to emerge, especially when he identified the order of reason and the order of nature, because without this identification, the 'general will', as it is defined in the *Social Contract*, would be unintelligible. All those who are not blinded by either 'passions' or 'partial interests' should be able to reach freedom by giving up their whole being to this force, thus becoming at once conscious and organized citizens. However, the 'general will' is not an addition to particular wills, it is not the will of a majority, and it is not a consensus of all wills either.

To discover the best rules of society suited to each nation would require a superior intelligence who saw all of man's passions and experienced none of them, who had no relation to our nature yet knew it thoroughly. (Rousseau, 1964 [1762]: 203 [Eng. 1997: 68])

It has been suggested that, to understand Rousseau's 'general will', it should be grasped in contrast to the cosmic automaton that the universe became after Newton (Jeannière, 1988: 64). Just as the driving power that animates the material bodies in the universe is immanent in the whole and in each one of them, a logical and reasonable force, which should be recognized as the only legitimate foundation of authority, is immanent in the political community and in each citizen. The same applies to the rationality of what Lévi-Strauss calls 'human mind', which can definitely be represented only by itself. Of course, Lévi-Strauss does not involve us in the dead ends of Rousseau. For him the cultural world is not a copy or a simple emanation of Newton's cosmic automaton. His analyses revealed the particular colourful nuances of the mind, which constitute the only function of the subject, as through a prism whose immense variety of reflections restores to man the freedom to play with the nature from which he emerged.

### **The Ethics of Identification**

At first sight, the precepts of structural method, which provide a base to ethics and which have guided Lévi-Strauss in the Rousseauist side of his thought, are simple and hardly exceed the stage of what he himself calls 'homely convictions' (Lévi-Strauss, 1971: 570 [Eng. 1981: 638]). They undoubtedly can be held in a single statement, whose general information is proportional to the extent of its consequences. First, it is a question of becoming aware of the obvious fact that man belongs to a whole, in which he can only illegitimately assume a prominent place. Second, a primary principle of identification and reconciliation of man with the world must guide any moral wisdom. The remainder is only remote or closer consequences. Although parts of the historical account are somewhat fuzzy and its empirical validity irrelevant, the concept of mediation and identification should be spelled out to clarify its appeal, for like the compassion of

Rousseau's natural man, it is morally and epistemologically central to Lévi-Strauss.

The direction of identification from natural to cultural, characteristic of the societies studied by the anthropologist, allowing the self to be affected by the other, brings about the spontaneous 'free identification' of self with other, whether that other be a parent, a relative, a compatriot, a fellow human, or indeed any other sentient being (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 50 [Eng. 1963: 38]). This empathetic apprehension of the other results in a reconciliation of self with the world: 'Freed from an antagonism which philosophy alone sought to stimulate, the self and the other recover their unity' (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 52 [Eng. 1963: 40]).

Rousseau already declared self-preservation and compassion as 'two principles operating prior to reason', that is, spontaneous movements of natural law. The imperative of self-preservation had been a commonplace of political thought since Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke and other 17th-century theorists. Rousseau explained this matter at considerable length in a series of his texts, making of compassion a rationalization of the natural sentiment of pity. Arguably, compassion already supposes comparisons of which the animal conscience seems incapable, and even pity seems to demand a higher degree of intellectual development than Rousseau was willing to credit to natural man, for in order to experience pity an individual must be able to accomplish a mental shift of imagining himself in the position of the thing experiencing the suffering (Charvet, 1974: 18–19; Goldschmidt, 1974: 331–56; Masters, 1968: 138–40). Still, in the preface to the *Discourse on Inequality* the second principle is highly significant.

Human beings in the pre-social state of nature must have been almost not self-aware; they did not think about themselves as objects among objects, but rather as a whole with the world. At some point, therefore, it must be compassion which 'inspires in us a natural aversion to seeing any other sentient being perish or suffer, especially if it is one of our kind', and Rousseau saw in this principle 'the unshakable basis' on which the 'natural faculties' of man and their 'successive developments' are built, and of which we must 'learn to respect the foundations' (1969 [1755]: 56–7 [Eng. 1984: 70–71]).

It was important therefore for Rousseau to distinguish between self-preservation (*amour de soi*) and self-interest (*amour-propre*). While the former was a 'natural sentiment', which, 'directed in man by reason and modified by pity, produces humanity and virtue', the latter 'is only a relative and artificial sentiment born in society' from comparison and reflection, which 'prompts each individual to attach more importance to himself than to anyone else', and which is the true source of all the ills afflicting human conscience and society (Rousseau, 1969 [1755]: 149 [Eng. 1984: 167]). An increased self-consciousness leads to the comparison of self with others, which leads to the desire to be better than others, to negate and to dominate them.

In Lévi-Strauss's view, this narcissistic projection of self onto the world, which is unable to grant man any principle of reflection and action other than self-esteem, and which does not permit us to see that culture itself is a manifestation of nature, is nothing else but the kind of identification practised by anthropocentric humanism. The type of humanism that philosophy has practised in the wake of Descartes and Western rationalism is a truncated humanism, harmful to the extent that it promotes the myth of an exclusive dignity. This type of shameful humanism is an attempt to fashion the world in its own image, opening the infernal cycle of assimilation and exploitation in which the frontier of otherness is perpetually displaced (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 53 [Eng. 1963: 41]).

To this extent, Lévi-Strauss's critique of Western humanism comes close to a favourite theme of the deconstructionists in other respects (e.g. Derrida, 1987), that is, the principal lines of Heidegger's critique of modernity, both in its cultural component with the advent of humanism and in its philosophical aspect with the conception of man as a subject. Instead of taking as its principle the separation of man from nature, which Heidegger called the scission of the subject from the object, 'structuralism reintegrates man into nature', to the extent of 'making it possible to disregard the subject – that unbearably spoilt child who has occupied the philosophical scene for too long now, and prevented serious research through demanding exclusive attention' (Lévi-Strauss, 1971: 614–15 [Eng. 1981: 687]).

Again it was Rousseau who radically upset the mainstream philosophy which, 'taking the *Cogito* as its point of departure, was imprisoned by the hypothetical evidences of the self'. As pity and 'identification with others' show, the self constitutes itself in his or her relation to the world only by starting from his or her relation with others and not by starting from the relation with oneself. Rousseau must even have anticipated, almost prophetically, the famous formula 'I is another', used by the young Arthur Rimbaud and the surrealists, and which indicates the relationship, to be reactivated afterwards, between poetical utopianism and the destitution of subject as it presents itself to consciousness. The very goal assigned to human knowledge by the anthropologist, which is 'to attain acceptance of oneself in others', implies that 'one must first deny the self in oneself' (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 48 [Eng. 1963: 36]).

Thus, even if Rousseau was a solitary voice in the Western tradition, he was far from falling into self-satisfaction and into mistrust and resentment towards his contemporaries, with which he is all too often credited. He appears, on the contrary, to overcome these reductive attitudes by means of a dispossession of himself and his immediate environment and, correlatively, by moving to a distance in an imaginary and heuristic way. In brief, instead of the 'I think, thus I am' of Descartes, who 'believes that he proceeds directly from a man's interiority to the exteriority of the world, without seeing that societies, civilizations, in other words, worlds of men, place themselves between these two extremes' (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 48 [Eng. 1963: 36]), what Rousseau asserts 'is that there exists a *he* who *thinks*

through me and who first causes me to doubt whether it is I who am thinking'. But:

. . . it is Rousseau's strictly anthropological teaching, that of the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, that discovers the foundation of this doubt. It lies in a conception of man which places the other before the self, and in a conception of humanity which places life before men. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 49 [Eng. 1963: 37])

Rousseau's epistemology is a Kantian thesis in that the self emerges in the active process of weighing and assessing sensations. Against Hume's position, he argued, albeit sketchily, that the self cannot be merely the sum of sensations, that sensations are always sensations of objects, and that the identity of objects can be established only by an active, unitary knowing subject. On the other hand, if the intimate experience only provides this *he* that Rousseau would have discovered, the Cartesian *Cogito* remains to some extent the illusory term of old humanism. No wonder, therefore that we see Lévi-Strauss bitterly attacking all that, for him, is only a rationalist illusion still cherishing the alleged pre-eminence of the *Cogito*. The philosophical and ethical range of the critique of *Cogito*, at least in the critique of its arrogance, which is apparent in modern civilization in the conception of man as master and lord of nature, is entirely claimed by Lévi-Strauss. The principal themes of this critique are connected explicitly under the authority of Rousseau, who proclaimed the 'end of the *Cogito*' and refused to philosophy the possibility of making a self-founded principle 'to put man out of the question, to be assured, from humanism, of a transcendental retreat' (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 50 [Eng. 1963: 38]).

In his tribute, Lévi-Strauss credited Rousseau with the merit of discovering the double otherness that arises from the observation of both the most remote and the closest state of being. Lévi-Strauss seized this epistemology from Rousseau to found his vision of anthropology, which supposes and at the same time solves this paradox of humanity that opposes the self and the other. After all, Lévi-Strauss, like Rousseau, rather than breaking with humanism, is renewing it. The rejection of the *Cogito* is nevertheless not a rejection of the conscience, for this *he* is thought and it is thought within oneself. What is important is to test within oneself what becomes conscious, in such a way as to cause the illusion of a subject defined by the *Cogito*. Rather than breaking with the idea of subject, Rousseau prepared the way for Kant, and later Lévi-Strauss, to tear it away from its solipsistic illusions. It is not thus a question of denying the existence of subject, but of affirming that the subject cannot emerge and oppose itself to other subjects exclusively inside a given cultural domain.

Beyond the opposition to Descartes or the affinity with Kant in an old and extremely complex debate, the place of Rousseau, formally chosen by himself, is that of an identification with all others and, correlatively, that of a refusal of identification with his self. No one has the right to be identified

with his or her *I* who thinks, any more than a particular culture has the right to identify itself with *the* culture and be defined by the unanimity of a discourse justifying the particular rules that emanate from this same discourse, for they are basically brought in from a distant, unconscious world.

In Lévi-Strauss's view, the identification with others forms the 'real principle of the human sciences and the only basis for ethics' (1962b: 55–6 [Eng. 1963: 43]). Through identification with others, as anthropologists, we reveal the classifying bonds that chain us. But, morally, the point of identifying with others is to dissolve our selfhood. Our language, thought, and our very concept of selfhood are formed by the categories imposed by society. To understand man one must disregard individuality to discover what one shares with men.

Far from offering a 'nostalgic refuge' for living in solitude, there is a fundamental teaching that conceives of identification as:

. . . proposing to today's humanity, through Rousseau's voice, the principle for all collective wisdom and action. In a world so encumbered where reciprocal *consideration* is rendered more difficult but all the more necessary, it is the only principle that can enable men to live together and to build a harmonious future. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 54 [Eng. 1963: 42])

The strategic importance of *Tristes Tropiques* in Lévi-Strauss's work, with their tellurian images of a 'mental ground' (Campion, 1996), has been to transport otherness and reality to be known into the self, by entrusting the mind and its own time with an activity of structuring the world and the time of the world which makes the world recognizable in and by the mind itself. At the same time, while relating the knowledge of this real and separate world to the knowledge of self, an epistemological problem is solved, an intellectual uneasiness is dissipated, and an ontological pain is soothed, that of the separation of subject from the object, of self from the other.

All that apparently disconcerted Derrida and many others, but, in Lévi-Strauss's view and epistemology, this is neither self-satisfaction nor a literary artifice, but one of the conditions of validity of the scientific approach in anthropology. The identification of self and other is made possible by the parallelism, founded in kind, between the symbolic character of cultures and the imaginary character of memory. It becomes the test of the humanity within oneself and constitutes the very principle of a differential anthropology.

The final lesson of *Tristes Tropiques* is then delivered by the necessary return to oneself (Debaene, 2002: 24). In this internal geography related to the sensory world, any personal identity has disappeared. The internal world became an anonymous one, because the ethnographer succeeded in finding the primary and founding identifications with others. The ethnographic experience thus reveals beyond the *self* this anonymous *he*, a particular

configuration certainly, but obeying the universal laws that articulate the significant contingencies in a space out of time where memories and sensations order themselves.

### **The Mission of Anthropology**

At the core of 'every ethnographic career', there must be *Confessions*, 'written or untold' (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b: 48 [Eng. 1963: 36]), but also this escape from Cartesianism, which, beyond the evidence of the self, authorizes the doubt of the self and the exploration of the most intimate areas of one's being. Rousseau's anthropology upset philosophical tradition and founded the unity of a politics where music, linguistics and biology mix together, just as the sensitive and the intelligible are melted together to teach the individual the art of freeing themselves from a society hostile to men to take refuge in the society of nature. In European thought, Rousseau represented not only one of the 'extreme limits of enlightenment', which would somehow compensate for the overwhelming nature of the relationship between 'civilization' and 'savagism'. He is infinitely more, since from the denunciation of this relationship he drew the elements of a social science that reconciles nature and culture, while he refused to get involved in the argument between the eulogists of the noble savage and the enthusiasts of civilization.

For Lévi-Strauss such a human science is especially a lesson of anthropology. Even his most virulent critics admit the subversive force of this thought (Duchet, 1984: 198), insofar as one has to acknowledge his unreserved acceptance of the human condition, not as an individual, but by opting for all of *us*, the whole of humankind without exception, and thus freeing himself from his intellectual pride by agreeing 'to subordinate his claims to the objective demands of the emancipation of the many, to whom the possibility of such a choice is still denied' (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 479 [Eng. 1973: 414]).

Lévi-Strauss does not retreat from ethical and political concerns altogether. The critique of 'mechanical civilization', as he termed it, is not an idealistic call for a return to the state of nature. For him, both views – of natural innocence and of cultural superiority – are guilty of unexamined idealizations, the first naïvely idealizing the 'noble savage' and the second uncritically idealizing the 'mechanical civilization' of the present. He believes that idealizations of this type allow only the complementary and mutually reinforcing prejudices of European civilization to come into play, and they do not acknowledge the fundamental responsibility that anthropology itself bears for the inexorable destruction of non-Western cultures.

Since ethnographic research might have served the interests of colonial rulers, one should not ignore the paramount feature of the anthropologists' traditional world, which was anything but colonial. According to Lévi-Strauss, ethnography must act now as a 'symbol of atonement', to make up for the crimes to which it probably contributed. Whereas the lack of political concern of an entire generation of his predecessors spared them

from confronting the question of what role anthropological research must take in the face of the colossal phenomenon of Western colonialism and the continuing destruction of non-Western cultures, it is precisely this question that is at the centre of Lévi-Strauss's work, long before the postcolonial, postmodern, post-structuralist and deconstructionist critical turns in social sciences and the humanities.

Already Rousseau, despite his despair at his own society, was a political optimist who actively constructed a political ideal and an educational programme. Society, as Rousseau knew, corrupts; but socialization has the potential to create humans who achieve far greater moral heights than in the state of nature. Emile must be educated outside 18th-century French society, but the purpose of doing so is not to turn him into a noble savage but into a civilian (Luhmann, 1990: 401). For Rousseau, true freedom arises in a legitimately governed society, where no individual suffers unduly for the benefit of others, but where each life gains through the acceptance of constraints. Where, then, to find the type of ideal society? Addressing man in general, Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* seems intended for the anthropologist to come:

There is, I feel, an age at which man would like to stand still; you are going to search for the age at which you would wish your whole species had stood still. Discontented with your present condition for reasons which presage for your unfortunate posterity even greater discontent, you will wish perhaps you could go backwards in time. (Rousseau, 1969 [1755]: 63 [Eng. 1984: 79])

Rousseau's goal was to argue that the state perhaps best suited to individual freedom and authentic human relations was one intermediate between the state of nature and the social state, and he 'thought that the way of life now known as Neolithic offered the nearest approach to an experimental representation of the type' (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 451–2 [Eng. 1973: 391]). In the lengthy meditation on the vocation and meaning of modern anthropology that occupies the closing chapters of *Tristes Tropiques*, Lévi-Strauss agrees with Rousseau's diagnosis. Reconstructing the 'highly charged atmosphere' of earlier research on American prehistory with the benefit of 20th-century archaeological science, he raised the possibility of a cultural connection that would assimilate the intermediary stage of that hypothetical social state described in Rousseau's *Discourse* with the level of cultural development that modern archaeological science has defined as the Neolithic revolution. The best, but in no sense perfect, time for humans was the Neolithic, post-agricultural, pre-urban age. For it was then that human mentality flourished, producing out of its 'science of the concrete' those arts of civilization, agriculture, animal husbandry, pottery, weaving, food conservation and preparation, which still provide the foundations of our existence. It is the event in which we find both the origins of history and almost the cultures of the New World, hence their heuristic exemplarity.

In this instance, many commentators have not only simplistically or naively misconstrued Lévi-Strauss, but also, following Derrida, downright wilfully slandered him, on the grounds that he is supposed to have made the historicity of Rousseau's natural state disappear, as if the task of the anthropologist were to rediscover societies preserved in the New World's forests from any change, societies that have remained in a primitive state, the state of the very first societies, what Rousseau called societies in a state of nature (Duchet, 1984).

Rousseau presented his own account only to argue for a certain view of a very real social inequality, and he described the nature of his hypothetical natural man in order to comprehend the variety, and hence malleability, of extant society. If Rousseau appears to have favoured a previous, more humane stage of human existence, this is not a purely natural state of humanity, which is impossible as far as the social state is an irreducible component of the human. What Rousseau called a 'state of nature' was for him only a theoretical state in the history of humanity, which contained the principle of its own constant transformation without corresponding to any real society.

While in *Tristes Tropiques* Lévi-Strauss incorporates Rousseau's conception of a 'state of nature', he twice quotes from the *Second Discourse* Preface the latter's noteworthy inclination to

... separate that which is primordial from that which is artificial in man's present nature, and attain a solid knowledge of a state which no longer exists, which perhaps never existed, and which will probably never exist, yet of which it is necessary to have sound ideas if we are to judge our present state satisfactorily. (Rousseau, 1969 [1755]: 53 [Eng. 1984: 68])

Lévi-Strauss turned Rousseau's sentence into a guiding methodological principle for constructing that theoretical model of society which, though it corresponds to none that can be observed in reality, will nonetheless help us towards an understanding of the basic foundations of human existence. The task of social reform consists in turning us toward Rousseau's middle state, not by drawing us back into the Neolithic but by presenting us with compelling reminders of its human achievements, its sociological grace, so as to draw us forward into a rational future where its ideals, the balancing of self-regard with generalized empathy, will be even more fully realized.

Natural man did not precede society, nor is he outside of it. Our task is to rediscover his form as it is immanent in the social state, for the human condition is inconceivable outside society. (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 453 [Eng. 1973: 392])

Lévi-Strauss's argument is that anthropology ought to provide us with a vantage point from which we can properly analyse, and perhaps reform, our social construct. The double sight informed by the observation of both the

closest state of being and the states of society that are most distant from our own ways of life, out of particles and fragments of debris which it is still possible to collect or which have already been collected, makes possible the first task of ethnographic research, that is, to increase our understanding of the 'principle of social life' and obtain a solely methodological notion of 'natural state', in order to provide the appropriate agency that can achieve such a reform.

Here again Rousseau is credited with having taught us that 'after demolishing all forms of social organization, we can still discover the principles which will allow us to construct a new form' (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 451 [Eng. 1973: 390]). If 'no society is perfect' (1973a [1955]: 446 [Eng. 1973: 386]), to find the 'unshakable basis of human society' recommended by Rousseau (1969 [1755]: 56–7 [Eng. 1984: 70–71]), it is anthropological comparison that, 'by bringing out the characteristics common to the majority of human societies . . . helps us to postulate a type, of which no society is a faithful realization, but which indicates the direction the investigation ought to follow' (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 451 [Eng. 1973: 391]).

Lévi-Strauss would see native systems of representation, which articulate the continuity of the human and the natural, together with the negative feedback characteristic of cold societies, as a kind of protective resistance and insulation against the alienating historical forms of social and economic development experienced in Western societies. He undertook his ethnological investigations to provide access, from the perspective of a modernity estranged from nature, to the cosmological world-view of these societies, based upon the hypothesis that they represent examples of forms of social life intimately engaged with nature. For Lévi-Strauss, the task of anthropology is to reconstruct, out of empirical data, theoretical models of such 'harmonious' and 'authentic' societies, since an unmediated return is no longer possible in this day and age. To the extent that these societies can show different solutions to common problems in the organization of social life, they can serve as mirrors in which a fragmented modernity may recognize that humans, as one life form among others, are bound up in solidarity with the cycle of nature. In accord with an increase in empirical information, the approximate picture of a 'natural sociality' can thus be reconstructed.

The expedition described in *Tristes Tropiques* could only reveal a surface strangeness of the savage. The bridge between our world and that of our subjects lies not in personal confrontation. One cannot understand the thought of savages, either by mere introspection or by mere observation, for one cannot picture their lives nor evoke, interpret or explain them. Despite this deception, however, anthropologists should not despair, worried in case we are never to know savages at all, because there is another avenue of approach to their world apart from personal involvement in it. At a deeper psychological level, they are not alien at all. If the mind of man is everywhere the same, the 'unshakable basis of human society' is not really social at all but psychological, a rational, universal, eternal and thus virtual mind.

We must, therefore, as Rousseau wished and Lévi-Strauss succeeded in doing, develop the ability to penetrate the mind by employing what Geertz called an ‘epistemological empathy’ (1973: 357). The anthropologist’s job is to understand how people think, rather than what they should, by attempting to think as they think and with their materials (Geertz, 1988; Luhrmann, 1990).

Savages can only be understood by re-enacting their thought processes with the debris of their cultures, by intellectually reconstituting the shape of their life out of their ‘archaeological’ remains, arranging and rearranging them into formal systems of correspondences. The ultimate quest of an anthropologist is to become a bricoleur, a scientist of the concrete, in order to reveal the principles of social life by deconstructing and reconstructing it. What could not be accomplished by a drawing near, by an attempt to enter bodily into the world of particular savage tribes, can be accomplished instead by a standing back, by the development of a general, closed, abstract, formalistic science of thought, a universal grammar of the intellect. As Geertz put it (1973: 351), what a journey to the heart of darkness could not produce, can be done by an immersion in structural analysis, communication theory, cybernetics and mathematical logic.

One understands, therefore, why Lévi-Strauss showed so much admiration for Rousseau, and we can take another view of Rousseauian moralism. The anthropologist reconstitutes the fragments of societies as given into terms that will be knowable to all men, while belonging to none in particular. This kind of experimental mind-reading is intended to demonstrate, as Lévi-Strauss argues in the conclusion of *Totemism*, ‘that every human mind is a locus of virtual experience where what goes on in the minds of men, however remote they may be, can be investigated’ (1962b: 151 [Eng. 1963: 103]).

In making the transmutation from ethnographic exploration to universal meaning which subsumes the content of history under the structural method of the science of the concrete, Lévi-Strauss does not evade the issue of particular historical responsibility, as is often believed (Scobie, 1977: 149), even though time’s destruction shifts from the New World to his own ethnographic memory. Indeed, ‘one order has been replaced by another’ (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 45 [Eng. 1973: 43]), not a new and whole social order for those who have been exploited, but a new conceptual order for the anthropologist. Like the colonial encounter that destroyed native cultures, *Tristes Tropiques* leads us to judge ethnographic knowledge as indefensible for, so far as it occurs, it corrupts both them and us. The only possibility is epistemological, not as a failure of imagination, but as a structural reconstitution of the alien world through its fragments, which might supply the conditions for understanding.

If Lévi-Strauss discovered in *Tristes Tropiques* that our original sense of the relation between us and them is naive, his project is to redraw the relation with more subtlety, not abandon its terms. Actually, the failure of the quest to engage a world of strangeness did not emancipate him from the

necessity of engaging at all. It did not free him to receive from his own history the fragments with which to recover a time lost. In so doing, he avoided both the presumption of the scientist and the naivety of the explorer, and he acknowledged the problem of us and them in all its difficulty.

As the narrative of *Tristes Tropiques* so eloquently testifies, the societies that exemplify proximate relations of demographically limited groups, political consensus, suspicion of instrumentality, resistance to historical change, or one aspect or another of this model, are in the process of rapidly disappearing. Lévi-Strauss himself considers the effects of the globalization of Western literate culture to be essentially irreversible. Of a pluralistic world little remains but 'contaminated memories' (Klein, 1995: 277–8). While picturing the significance of deteriorating memory, he worried about the duplicity of the past, with its substitution of idealized images for grim reality, and drew an unhappy picture of the world overrun by the homogenizing and destructive effects of colonial capitalism.

However, while the voice of these societies increasingly fades into the background noise of a global monoculture, it is at this point that, as Johnson (2003: 117) put it, one can perceive or at least suspect another possible instance of judgement or decision. The only remaining voice is that of the anthropologist, not freed from the burdens of being local and present, but portrayed as the conscience and consciousness of the West, the 'witness' and ambivalent mediator of cultural diversity and of cultures radically different from our own (Lévi-Strauss, 1973b [1960]: 44 [Eng. 1977: 32]), that have been destroyed by the very locality from which he could not extricate himself.

Ultimately, the virtual reconstructions of structural anthropology are a possible means of information retrieval, and the seemingly detached and abstract activity of structural analysis becomes a task and a kind of mission, the reincarnation of lost mental worlds. The final contribution of anthropology and structural analysis would be to provide an 'experimental representation', a virtual model of more authentic forms of social organization, which can be applied to the reform of our own society.

If, in Lévi-Strauss's terminology, the 'unshakable basis of human society' is the 'neolithic intelligence' of which the theoretical foundation is the 'savage mind', by substituting for the Rousseauist concept of the state of nature that of '*tristes tropiques*', Lévi-Strauss made a significant move. Instead of an opposition between the state of nature and the state of society, we have an opposition between mechanical and statistical models, between elementary and complex structures of social organization, between reversible and irreversible times, between 'cold' and 'hot' processes of historical change and social-cultural development.

In brief, the task of anthropology would consist, 'above all in gloomy times', in arousing 'a permanent possibility of humanity' that is embedded 'in the ways of thought and life' of non-Western societies (Lévi-Strauss, 1973b [1960]: 42 [Eng. 1977: 30]). By bringing together methods and techniques borrowed from all the sciences to serve in the understanding of man,

anthropology would carry out this fusion of man in the 'system of beings'. Lévi-Strauss is determined not to take part in the fracture that occurred between humans and nature under the cover of an anthropocentric tradition of which the West was becoming the eulogist. The reconciliation of humans and the world, like that of the sensitive and the intelligible, is biologically founded, that is, factually verifiable, for Lévi-Strauss, and seems to carry in itself the ethical principle of promoting respect and tolerance, made possible by means of the identification founded in kind. Thus, at the antipodes of the objections made by phenomenological philosophy, the ultimate vocation of anthropology is to call 'for the reconciliation of man and nature' in a 'democratic' and 'generalized humanism' (1973d: 322 [Eng. 1977: 274]).

To the extent that the aim is the construction of a model resuming the authentic transformations fundamental to all societies, Lévi-Strauss is here again a model-builder, describing a hypothetical stage of human development intermediate between the state of nature and the social state, approximate but not equivalent to that of 'primitive' societies in his own century. After the anthropologist is freed from the task of understanding alien societies in their strangeness and particularity, the terms of scientific discourse will be free of any single locale, because they will reach that level where ordinary local discourse is grounded. Indeed, his whole purpose is to translate social life from its given terms into that 'ideal repertoire' of universally valid elements. A respect for locality gives way to the desire for totality. 'The study of these savages leads to something other than the revelation of a Utopian state of nature or the discovery of the perfect society in the depths of the forest; it helps us to build a theoretical model of human society' (Lévi-Strauss, 1973a [1955]: 453 [Eng. 1973: 392]). Thus the ethnography described in *Tristes Tropiques* is not simply a neutral mediator of cultural diversity but, more precisely, a *structural* anthropology. As Geertz (1973: 356) put it, the high science of *Mythologiques* and the heroic quest of *Tristes Tropiques* are, at base, but 'very simple transformations' of one another.

## Conclusion

Anthropology can be considered by Lévi-Strauss as a new form of humanism insofar as it is a form of objectification which supposes subjective difference. When the human mind becomes at once an actor and an object of anthropology, Lévi-Strauss's humanism becomes the concrete capturing of this humanity present in each individual of each culture. There is no longer a question of dissolving man, but of enrolling anthropology within a secular project of the emancipation of humankind. Lévi-Strauss deplores the way progress toward humanness and the gradual unfolding of higher intellectual faculties was destroyed by Western cultural parochialism, armed with a half-grown science that excluded the people subjected to its empire. Anthropologists are today liberated from the 'equivocal dialogue' with colonialism. Therefore anthropology can consider, as Lévi-Strauss proclaimed with humanistic accents, that it has arrived 'at maturity' from the moment when

no people is any longer treated 'as an object' (1973b [1960]: 44 [Eng. 1977: 32]). Thereafter, cultural universalism, armed with that mature science, will once more set progress in motion.

In the context of the gradual dissolution of colonialism accompanied by a certain globalization of modern culture, Lévi-Strauss reminds us that the study of non-Western societies to some extent represents the conscience of the West. The goal of anthropology as a *human* science grounded on a scientific method is to offer a solution to what is felt as the anomie of Western societies, by presenting the example of the relative authenticity of other cultures. He urged anthropology to be 'able to affirm itself as an enterprise renewing the Renaissance and atoning for it, in order to extend humanism to the measure of humanity' (Lévi-Strauss, 1973b [1960]: 44 [Eng. 1977: 32]).

### Notes

1. The first date is of the most recent French edition, and is followed by that of the original French edition in square brackets. The dates and page numbers of English translations of the works are also given, in square brackets, following the French page reference.
2. Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* (1969 [1755] [Eng. 1984]) is commonly referred to as the *Second Discourse*. The *First Discourse* was his *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (1750).

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