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Une lumière éclatant inonde l'atmosphère

Une lumière si colorée et si fluide que les objets qu'elle touche

Les rochers roses

Le phare blanc qui les surmonte

Les signaux du sémaphore me semblent liquéfiés

Blaise Cendrars, *Rio de Janeiro*

A boat approaches the coast. The waves of the ocean reflect the light of the midday sun. On board is a Frenchman, well dressed, wearing an elegant hat. In his luggage, the most powerful tools of Western culture. He has not yet set foot on solid ground, but already images of the other's culture insinuate themselves into his head. Before he even makes contact, the distorted reflection is already at work. The man is not twenty-six, but thirty-six, and it is not his first great voyage. It was in January 1924 that Frédéric-Louis Sauser, better known as Blaise Cendrars, arrived in Brazil at the invitation of Paulo Prado, a businessman and patron of modern art in São Paulo. The scene of his arrival was later reconstructed for the cinema in *Um filme 100% brasileiro* by José Sette de Barros (1985). The gifted writer, whose work fed upon his travels and adventures, was full of anticipation. He had gone to New York in 1911 and, earlier, in the revolutionary years between 1904 and 1907, to Moscow and Saint Petersburg. But in Brazil, which had inspired his *nom de plume*, he expected more. In the film, the artist disembarked in Rio de Janeiro. The city, bathed in the atmosphere of Carnival, immersed him in an adventure of the senses. Imagination and reality blended together, in the film as in Cendrars' life and literature. In real life he landed in São Paulo, where he became friends with the poets Mário de Andrade, Manuel Bandeira, and Carlos Drummond de Andrade, with the painter Cícero Dias, the poet Oswald de Andrade, and the painter Tarsila do Amaral, whom he would affectionately call 'the most beautiful *Paulista* in the world'. In the city the air was ripe with new beginnings. Two years earlier, in 1922, it had celebrated the centenary of Brazil's independence from Portugal. In the wake of the First World War, this increased distancing from Europe manifested itself particularly in the field of art. From February 11–17, 1922, the

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city hosted the Modern Art Week, a festival held at the *Teatro Municipal* and organized by a group of artists from the modernist avant-garde. The festival presented the work of painters, sculptors, poets, and musicians and aimed at declaring the end of cultural colonialism (Pécaut, 1989: 14–23; Williams, 2001: 36 ff.).

In 1935 a freighter departed Marseilles bound for Brazil, carrying a young, twenty-six-year-old French professor eager to encounter the New World. The same scene repeated itself. The ship, having crossed the Atlantic, spent a few days traveling along the coast of the *Terra do Brasil*. In his imagination, the young scholar could already smell the perfume of the tropical vegetation. In just a few months he had devoured an incredible number of texts to prepare himself for the new challenges ahead. Once again we might presume that the distorted reflection described in Bruno Karsenti's essay had already begun its work before his arrival. Twenty years later, Claude Lévi-Strauss would compose his reflections on this departure.

His telephone had rung one autumn Sunday in 1934. Célestin Bouglé, then director of the *École normale supérieure*, invited the young *lycée* instructor to apply for a chair in sociology at the University of São Paulo. After ten years of political *engagement* and two years of teaching in secondary school, the call offered him the chance to leave behind a life that had begun to bore him and no longer gave him satisfaction. In reality, until that moment he had never been really satisfied; there had always been something missing that kept him from feeling truly fulfilled. He had demonstrated his abilities in various fields and disciplines, but he didn't yet know what to do with his life and he was still searching for his true calling. Reading the book *Primitive Society*, by Robert H. Lowie, he discovered a science that united all the elements that he needed to satisfy his intellectual and temperamental needs. By moving to Brazil he would finally have the opportunity to pursue the *métier* of the ethnographer, which he would have to learn from the ground up.

Lévi-Strauss was expected to present himself promptly to George Dumas, under whom he had studied during the period of the latter's fame for his *Traité de psychologie*. Dumas, a prominent figure in pathological psychology in France and a scholar of Auguste Comte, had presided over the creation of the *Instituto Franco-Brasileiro de Alta Cultura* in Rio de Janeiro in 1923 and of other institutes in São Paulo in 1925, and had been charged with selecting the professors for the Faculty of Philosophy, Science and Letters that the state government of São Paulo was in the process of establishing (Bertholet, 2003: 71 ff.). In February 1935 Lévi-Strauss left on one of the transatlantic steamers owned by the *Compagnie des Transports Maritimes*, which made various stops along the Iberian and African coasts before leaving the Old World and heading to Brazil. After a pause in Vitória he arrived in Rio de Janeiro, which he did not greet with the same enthusastic words as Blaise Cendrars. Setting foot for the first time on Brazilian soil, he was reminded of the long history of the relationship between Europeans and the New World, and in particular the role that France had played after the discovery of Brazil. The names of Cousin, Cabral, Gonneville, Villegaignon, and Léry danced in his head. Like all travelers, Lévi-Strauss had to reckon with his own exoticism. He knew, naturally, that he would not find a paradise on earth, but upon arriving he was nevertheless greatly disillusioned. It was not his rational mind that was disappointed, however, but remote emotions that he had nurtured since childhood, fascinated by exotic curiosities, Japanese etchings, and African *objets d'art*. With his classmates he had undertaken 'expeditions' on the periphery of Paris, and devoured Cervantes and James Fenimore Cooper (Bertholet, 2003: 19 ff.). An admirer of Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Balzac, Baudelaire, Dickens, Dostoyevsky, and Conrad, he had cultivated and subconsciously preserved romantic fantasies that he would reflect on during long tropical nights in Brazil, fantasies that the conscious Self did not consider real, but which revealed all their power the moment they emerged from the subconscious and shattered, like the surface of the earth that rises and cracks under great tectonic pressure, bringing the repressed into the light of day. 'Journeys, those magic caskets full of dreamlike promises, will never again

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yield up their treasures untarnished. A proliferating and overexcited civilization has broken the silence of the seas once and for all' (Lévi-Strauss, 1992a: 37). He wished he had 'lived in the days of *real* journeys', and imagined himself an 'archaeologist of space, seeking in vain to recreate a lost local colour with the help of fragments and debris' (Lévi-Strauss, 1992a: 43). The impact was strong, and instead of concentrating on this new reality and dealing with the New World that was right before his eyes, he threw himself into digesting the Old World that he had brought with him. 'A few hundred years hence, in this same place, another traveler, as despairing as myself, will mourn the disappearance of what I might have seen, but failed to see. I am subject to a double infirmity: all that I perceive offends me, and I constantly reproach myself for not seeing as much as I should' (Lévi-Strauss, 1992a: 43).

Before being able to write about his years in Brazil, these lived experiences had to settle, become sediment, and be covered by experiences made in other countries. In 1950 he traveled to India and Pakistan. The impressions he gathered on these voyages retrospectively produced a deep influence on his recollections of Brazil. The East would not appear as the origin and counterpart of the West, but as its future – a terrible future, characterized by pollution and overpopulation.

For Lévi-Strauss, it was his first direct encounter with the Muslim world. His expressions of distaste for Islam reflected what he detested about his own culture: the crushing universalism, the sense of superiority, the ostentatious declarations of tolerance which masked what was in reality inclusivism, the same problematic rapport with nature, 'the same bookish attitude, the same Utopian spirit and the stubborn conviction that it is enough to solve problems on paper to be immediately rid of them' (Lévi-Strauss, 1992a: 405). The West and the Islamic world, which seemed to be two different, conflicting worlds, in fact resembled each other. Islam represented the West of the East. This was not the projection of a Western scholar who sought the familiar in a culture that was not his own, but a mechanism that Lévi-Strauss studied at length, gradually developing the outlines of the method that Bruno Karsenti has reconstructed in his contribution to this volume. We never perceive the culture of others directly, but always in a mediated form. Like a distorted reflection, we see the other culture as an image in which we confusedly perceive something oddly familiar, without being able to identify it. The familiar element that defies identification vexes us and provokes our reaction: we transform it into complete strangeness. This is the exact process that occurs in the Western relationship to Islam: 'unable to identify just what about it is similar to ourselves, we place it into the category of a constructed strangeness, and separate ourselves from it all the more as we "confusedly" perceive that it actually resembles us' (Karsenti). In order to escape the illusion of these reflections, a third figure must also enter the field: Buddhism. Lévi-Strauss neither had nor could have had the intention of presenting a thorough scholarly portrait of Islam in all its various historical forms, but he did claim to be able to pass judgment on some structural elements of Islam as a whole, which he deduced through comparison with the West, on one hand, and Buddhism, on the other. And it was through the image of a stylized Buddhism that he sought to illustrate to us what the West and Islam really are. For Lévi-Strauss, only Buddhism could provide a valid response to the fears of humans. What led Lévi-Strauss to this assessment was – in addition to the intellectual satisfaction that Buddhism offers – his own personal experience, entering a temple and being welcomed with warmth and cordiality. Unlike other religions, Buddhism has never inspired missionary zeal. There is no coercion; affiliation must be the fruit of personal discovery. Assisting Buddhism in modern times in its opposition to the West and the 'West of the East', traditions that claim authority over nature and history, is Marxism – at least, that of Lévi-Strauss' interpretation – with its materialist conception of history, which repositions human society in its proper physical context. Karsenti provides a rigorous analysis of this 'unexpected comparison' between Buddhism and Marxism.

Through the image of the distorted reflection, Lévi-Strauss illustrated the nature of totemic representation. The critique of orientalism occupies the same vein as the critique of totemic illusion;

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orientalism masks the construction of the East by Western cultures, which need it to create and reify their own identity. Andre Gingrich has identified one particular variant of orientalism with his concept of 'frontier orientalism', which operates through the image of a contested, nearby border that is the subject of a struggle with the Eastern, represented in the myths of Central and Eastern Europe by the Turkish Muslim who threatens the Christian West. Frontier orientalism functions as a model for the exegesis and interpretation of current events and processes, from the 'crusades' against terrorism to the referendum over minarets in Switzerland. The myth used can also be invented; instrumentalized by nationalism and neo-nationalism, frontier orientalism becomes a potent ideological weapon. Gingrich's essay demonstrates the relevance of the structural analysis of myth for a critique of hegemony in the contemporary world.

But let us return to Brazil. In Rio, Lévi-Strauss was welcomed with open arms by the *Cristo Redentor*, the monument atop Corcovado, designed by his countryman Paul Landowski and inaugurated by President Getúlio Vargas in a pompous ceremony a few years before his arrival. Lévi-Strauss was unimpressed, mentioning only a hotel on the slope of Corcovado where he stopped to meet an American colleague. Vargas had taken power during the 1930 revolution. Defeated by the *paulista* Júlio Prestes in the presidential elections of 1930, Vargas rose up with the support of the military, suspended the constitution of 1891, and gathered all state power in his own person. In 1932 he suppressed the revolution of the old *paulista* oligarchy, which had already been greatly weakened by the widespread coffee crisis, and in 1935 – when Lévi-Strauss was already in São Paulo – put down a rebellion of the communists and the Aliança Nacional Libertadora. The legendary Luís Carlos Prestes, who had returned from the Soviet Union in 1934, was arrested, and his companion, the German Jew Olga Benario, was extradited back to Nazi Germany (Zoller, 2000).

Among the participants in the 1922 Modern Art Week was Plínio Salgado, the modernist writer who in 1932 would found the Ação Integralista Brasileira, the party of the extreme right. Salgado's integralism, the most significant nationalist movement in Brazil's history, claimed to be anti-democratic, anti-capitalist, and anti-communist. Salgado was inspired by Nazi and Fascist symbolism, but rejected racist ideology. In 1933, the integralists held their first demonstrations in São Paulo. Two years later their membership numbered in the hundreds of thousands, supporting Vargas against the radical and liberal left (Pécaut, 1989: 65 ff.).

All of this could not have failed to make an impression on the young Lévi-Strauss, who only a short time earlier had aspired to become the philosopher of the *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière* (SFIO). But now his role was different. He followed these events with great interest, but with the distance of the ethnographer.

The creation of the University of São Paulo was due to the initiative of the *paulista* elite, who held a positivist vision of the world. The new academy did not invite only French scholars, although in the social and human sciences the French delegations were the most prominent. The first contingent to arrive in 1934 included the sociologist Paul Arbousse-Bastide, a relative of George Dumas. Among the invitees in 1935 were Lévi-Strauss in sociology (which also included anthropology), and Jean Maugüé for philosophy. Subsequent invitations were extended to Fernand Braudel, Pierre Hourcade, and Michel Berveiller. Arbousse-Bastide and Lévi-Strauss almost immediately found themselves in open competition. The former, an expert in Comte like his cousin Dumas, aligned himself with the university administration, all ardent partisans of positivism. Lévi-Strauss could count on the support of the geographer Pierre Monbeig, and of Fernand Braudel; the latter was not yet famous, but he was further ahead in his career, and had enough influence to intervene on Lévi-Strauss' behalf. In 1937 Braudel returned to France, summoned by the *École pratique des hautes études*, and he was replaced in 1938 by Jean Gagé (Lévi-Strauss and Éribon, 1991: 20; Peixoto, 2004: 87; Bertholet, 2003: 72, 81).

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Lévi-Strauss was invited to the new Brazilian academy along with other young professors in accordance with Dumas' project to consolidate French influence and continue the tradition of Comte and Durkheim. These expectations created no small difficulties for Lévi-Strauss, as he himself would recall, since at that time he was quite fascinated 'by anthropology of Anglo-American inspiration' (Lévi-Strauss and Éribon 1991: 20). For his lectures he had studied the *Cours de philosophie positive*, but he still knew little about the *Système de politique positive*. As Frédéric Keck has demonstrated, the reading of this work led the later Lévi-Strauss to reevaluate the role of the father of positivism (Keck, 2008: 1804–1810).

Coming from a family of artists, Lévi-Strauss always maintained a special rapport with the arts. In the stimulating atmosphere of 1930s São Paulo, he was good friends with several of the greatest representatives of the *paulista* scene. He was particularly close with Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade, who were a point of reference for all modernists in São Paulo. Their interests overlapped: Lévi-Strauss took part in debates over modern art – as demonstrated by his article *O cubismo e a vida cotidiana*, published in the *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* in 1935 – while Brazilian writers engaged themselves on anthropological topics. Mário de Andrade's novel *Macunaíma* (1928), commonly considered one of the classics of Brazilian literature, was inspired by Theodor Koch-Grünberg's report on his expeditions through the border regions between Brazil and Venezuela from 1911 to 1913, in which the German ethnologist had recounted numerous myths and legends.

The cultural history of Brazil reveals still further connections. Less surprising, but equally relevant, were the relationships between French and German scholars and researchers. Koch-Grünberg will be remembered above all for his research in North and Northwest Brazil. But his first expedition, from 1898–1900, took him to central Brazil and the Rio Xingu; his goal there was to follow and map the Ronuro river. Upon his return to Germany, he published his 1901 book *Zum Animismus der Südamerikanischen Indianer*, followed in 1902 by a monograph on the Gran Chaco which won the admiration of Adolf Bastian, who brought Koch-Grünberg to the Ethnological Museum of Berlin. There, he worked for eight years alongside Karl von den Steinen and Paul Ehrenreich, pioneers in anthropological research on central Brazil. During their famous second expedition in the Xingu region, the latter two gathered important data on various ethnic groups, among them the Bororo, Lévi-Strauss' 'good savages'. Karl von den Steinen inspired Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, who in turn influenced Koch-Grünberg. Lévi-Strauss' article on the Bororo was later approved by Lévy-Bruhl as a member of the publishing committee for the *Société des Américanistes*.

At the end of his mandate, Vargas set in motion his plans for an authoritarian turn: in October 1937, he proclaimed a state of emergency, and a few weeks later he dissolved the National Congress and state assemblies, outlawed all political parties, and decreed a new constitution, creating the *Estado Nôvo*. These events coincided with the end of the academic calendar year; for the second time, Lévi-Strauss returned to Paris, and after his return to São Paulo in the spring of 1938 he threw himself into preparations for his most intense research trip yet into the Amazonian rainforest.

Vargas aimed to modernize the country through a series of social and economic policies that depended on the new state apparatus. Great importance was given to the sectors of research and development, placed into the service of a collective identity that sought to reduce social tensions and accelerate the process of modernization. The Ministry for Culture and Health, established by Vargas in 1930 and headed after 1934 by Gustavo Capanema, propagated the myth of a harmonious multiethnic society. Capanema, a liberal moderate who came from Catholic circles, sought to involve the modernists in this grand project of nation building. Carlos Drummond de Andrade became head of his cabinet, and Mário de Andrade an influential advisor on cultural policy. Several of Lévi-Strauss' expeditions were in fact co-financed by the city of São Paulo thanks to the help of Mário de Andrade (Peixoto, 2004: 91, n. 3).

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With the establishment of the *Estado Nôvo* the atmosphere changed. Many intellectuals on the left were arrested, like Graciliano Ramos, or went into exile, like Jorge Amado. In early January 1939 Lévi-Strauss returned to São Paulo after more than eight months in the field. Others would remain in Brazil, but he left, disgusted by the atmosphere at the university and by Vargas' regime. In February he was in Santos, where he met Alfred Métraux. Before leaving the country he was arrested twice. At the end of March he returned to Paris. He would not return to Brazil until 1985, in the company of François Mitterrand (Bertholet, 2003: 117 ff.).

In February 1941 he left France once more, when Alfred Métraux and Robert H. Lowie offered him the opportunity to move to the United States. This would prove to be a decisive period in his intellectual formation. There, he would meet Franz Boas and Roman Jakobson, who would help him develop his ideas about structuralism. Domenico Silvestri's essay examines this *rapprochement* between anthropology and linguistics, employing the sophisticated tools of the linguist, in order to understand the debt that Lévi-Strauss' anthropology owes to structural linguistics.

In Brazil, Lévi-Strauss had acquired the ethnographic experience necessary for him to become an anthropologist, and to be able to evaluate and appreciate the work done by other ethnographers both past and present. He had abandoned philosophy, but only in the academic sense; he retained a strong inclination for grand theories, and his own character pushed him toward the search for transverse structures. No one has criticized his 'march toward abstraction' more strongly than Clifford Geertz. Francesco Remotti, whose contribution suggests a cautious reappraisal of Lévi-Strauss' oeuvre, has perceived a need to integrate the two contrasting approaches: ethnography, or local knowledge, and transcultural comparison. To expand upon his position, Remotti turns to Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblances and the image of the 'open sea', which he puts forward as an alternative concept to both the 'closed' universes of Lévi-Strauss' structuralism as well as Geertz's 'closed' communities. But Remotti's essay also reminds us that Lévi-Strauss, while eternally faithful to his fundamental ideas, also repeatedly sought to reevaluate his positions and adjust his theories, as for instance when he wrote of the study of the family that 'we do not yet know what exactly the family is' (Lévi-Strauss, 1992b: 55).

There can be no doubt about the singular role that Lévi-Strauss played in the intellectual history of the twentieth century. Not even his most intransigent opponents would deny the importance of his work. 'No other anthropologist has exerted such a far-reaching influence outside of the own discipline. The impact of his work embraces a wide range of subjects, extending from ethnology to linguistics, philosophy to history, psychology to literary criticism, semiotics to sociology, religious studies to psychoanalysis, art to contemporary music. And in all these fields Lévi-Strauss' work has fallen like a nourishing rain, giving them fresh vitality' (Niola, 2008: 9–10). On several occasions Marino Niola has endeavored to demonstrate the lack of foundation behind the attribution to Lévi-Strauss of 'varied and frequently conflicting labels: idealism, anti-historicism, anti-humanism' (Niola, 2008: 12). Weaving through the immense body of literature that Lévi-Strauss left behind, we can find many different examples of a philosophical skepticism that differentiated him from historicism or naturalism, historical or biological determinism, abstract universalism or cultural relativism. It was not history, but the philosophy of history, that was his target. What he rejected were not the concepts of history or humanism in and of themselves, but rather the traditions that, in the name of these concepts, practiced and justified an anthropocentrism that saw humankind as the ultimate end of all creation. Lévi-Strauss emphasized the inhumane aspect of an anthropocentric humanism that isolated humans from the rest of the natural world. Humans must be returned to their proper place: this was the anthropologist's mission.

Lévi-Strauss' boundless and complex oeuvre has been the subject of various systematizing interpretations that stand in contrast with his own self-interpretation. While always guided in his research and reflection by the same principles, he never sought to see his own work in terms of a

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'system'. As Domenico Silvestri emphasizes in this issue of *Diogenes*, 'Lévi-Strauss' structuralism is in no way characterized by a methodological "fundamentalism". To the contrary, it admits open and integrated systems'. Ugo E. M. Fabietti has proposed a transversal reading of Lévi-Strauss' theoretical and ethnographical work that avoids the pitfalls of a false systematization or historicization. As Fabietti himself explains, the adjectives that make up the title of his essay – *Modern, Ultramodern, Antimodern* – 'possess an essentially descriptive function: they do not reflect a desire to see in Lévi-Strauss' work a series of "phases" or "moments" that unfold in linear succession'. Lévi-Strauss pursued the modernist project of a 'science of man' in his entirety, which carried within it the seeds of his ultramodernism: the 'dissolution of man'. His pessimism was not the endpoint of a journey, but rather an element of his thought that was present from the outset. Faced with the imperturbability of the cosmos, all the efforts of the human genius dissolve into nothing. Just as a single human being is born, lives, and then dies and decomposes, so mankind appeared and will disappear without a trace: 'The world began without man and will end without him' (Lévi-Strauss, 1992a: 413). This is the apotheosis of Lévi-Strauss' antimodern side, if by antimodern we understand with Fabietti 'a persistent, if not truly systematic, criticism of the supposed progress of the society that we generally call "modern". The criticism of one who has passed *through* modernism, and seems to have followed it all the way to its most extreme logical consequences.' The ultramodernism of Lévi-Strauss' thought establishes the grounds for a rhetoric that accepts paradoxical arguments. Fabietti analyzes the paradoxes of Lévi-Strauss' antimodernism and demonstrates the dangers of a discourse that does not remain coherently rational.

In an interview with Wiktor Stoczkowski, Lévi-Strauss cited the exponential growth of the world's population as the greatest catastrophe he had witnessed in his lifetime. During his life the population of the globe grew from one and a half billion to well over seven billion. The excessive proliferation of the human race has been the cause of the world's great evils: xenophobia, racism, war, and the ecological collapse of the planet. The primary cause of this demographic explosion was, according to Lévi-Strauss, a disastrous form of humanism that placed human existence at the center of the universe – without justification, but not without consequences. As Stoczkowski demonstrates, Lévi-Strauss' declarations on demographic growth were not simply the expression of personal pessimism without a basis in scientific rationality. His view of overpopulation was always grounded in a solid knowledge of the relevant scientific research. In the 1950s the subject of overpopulation was the center of attention for many international organizations, and Lévi-Strauss himself participated actively in debates on this subject in his capacity as Secretary-General of the International Social Science Council (*Conseil International des Sciences Sociales*). Stoczkowski, whose book *Anthropologies rédemptrices* provides a detailed reconstruction of Lévi-Strauss' cosmology, has also rightly reminded us just how the discussion of issues related to overpopulation was already well underway in the 1950s and 1960s.

In his writings on Lévi-Strauss, Salvatore D'Onofrio has often returned to the theme of the 'catastrophe in which we are all simultaneously perpetrators and victims' (D'Onofrio, 2008: 8). A list of contemporary global environmental disasters validates, today more than ever, the Cassandra of the Collège de France. Humans, far from being rational creatures, seem not so different from those primitive organisms that die in their own excrement. And there is no inversion of this tendency on the horizon. Certainly, one cannot consider rational the behavior of a 'civilization' that continues to annihilate the resources of a finite world.

Lévi-Strauss departed on a great voyage, but already on his first stops he found himself mired deep in the mud of a self-destructive humanity. He was impressed by the decadence of the Brazilian metropolises: '[They] pass from freshness to decay without ever being simply old' (Lévi-Strauss, 1992a: 95). The cities 'of the New World live feverishly in the grip of a chronic disease; they are perpetually young, yet never healthy' (Lévi-Strauss, 1992a: 96). The motto of the positivists,

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Ordem e Progresso, never convinced him. In the 1950s, when virtually everyone thought solely of economic growth, Lévi-Strauss criticized a vision of international development that had already gone down the wrong path. Long before the birth of the environmental movement, he foresaw the catastrophic effects of uncontrolled growth. Humankind had to resituate itself in nature to be able to survive, not returning to its origins, but establishing a new equilibrium that would allow for the conservation of all species. Are we too late? The scholar must be skeptical. Humans cannot escape entropy. With their labors they participate in the 'disintegration of the original order of things […] hurrying on powerfully organized matter towards ever greater inertia, an inertia that one day will be final' (Lévi-Strauss, 1992a: 413). To read similar arguments one need not wait to reach the final pages of *The Naked Man*; already in *Tristes Tropiques* one finds a pessimism that is difficult to overcome. What sense was there in writing additional thousands and thousands of pages, if the disappearance of mankind was already inevitable? We can only presume that there was a hidden dialectic at play, which kept the thinker in motion, an unconfessed spark of hope that never left him, and that gave him the strength to undertake and complete such a vast body of work.

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