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NEW HORIZONS OF ANTHROPOLOGY

The late Professor D.N. Majumdar was a charismatic teacher and undoubtedly a pioneer of academic anthropology in North India. I have the good fortune of possessing letters written by him during 1958-59, shortly before his untimely demise, where he spells out in intense pithy sentences his utter devotion to the subject of anthropology, immense care and love for his students, and an amazing dynamism to keep abreast of the latest currents in his chosen discipline. In paying a tribute to his memory I can do no better than deliberate on the main currents of socio-cultural anthropology at present and in the foreseeable future.

The theme of my lecture, substantively, is anthropological methodology and its empirical range that define the new horizons of anthropology. I wish to proceed by three methodological steps:

- a) The intellectual differentiations, politico-cultural entailments, and contemporary relevance of the Enlightenment heritage of the West, since the seventeenth century of the Christian era. To my mind these considerations are essential to trace the historical context of the anthropological knowledge-generation everywhere, including that in India.
- b) Moving closer to socio-cultural anthropology, the heuristic divide between the Western ethnographic practice and the Indian gaze in the problem area of understanding the 'other'.
- c) The practice of cultural translation in social anthropology
- (a) The Enlightenment tradition of the West: culture and politics

To unravel the epistemological roots of anthropology we need to look at the Enlightenment tradition of the West since the seventeenth century of the Christian era. Principles such as the tenets of scientific rationality and formal aspects of democracy, including the commitment to basic liberal individual rights, seem to characterize the intellectual-cum-political watershed in knowledge-generation and historical shaping of the modern world. What we need to appreciate, however, are the much broader cultural phenomena

entailed in this historical epistemological break. A more nuanced but, at the same time, culturally vapid though politically sharp critique suggests that the main principles at issue are not those of scientific rationality or of democratic liberalism but rather the principles by which one does not occupy another's lands and brutalize the people there, the principles by which one does not support corrupt and authoritarian regimes, the principles by which one does not overthrow perfectly honorable leaders and governments and replace them with monstrous, tyrannical governments that serve one's economic and generally hegemonic political ends (see, e.g., Mamdani 2004). While one may agree with the broad outlines of this political critique, it does tend to throw the cultural baby out with the bathwater of disreputable politics. For a start, to bring the cultural entailment back into our discourse, we need to consider what Max Weber called the post-Enlightenment "disenchantment" of the modern world. However, what needs to be done further is to focus on the more general issue of culture's relation to politics (see also, Asad 1968: 147-148), not to dismiss the cultural surround of politics which is a tendency on the part of Mamdani and much of the traditional Left. Bilgrami (2006: 3591-3603) attempts one such critique to emphasize the integrated position that links politics to the cultural and intellectual stances of the Enlightenment, and in what follows I shall build mainly on his critique before evaluating its bearing on anthropological epistemology.

While analyzing the epistemological breakthrough instantiated by the European Enlightenment it is logically demonstrable that one should distinguish between a 'thin' notion of rationality—one that is uncontroversially possessed by all (undamaged, adult, human minds)—and a 'thick' notion of rationality, a notion that owes to specific historical developments in outlook around the time of the rise of science and its implications for how to think ("rationally") about culture and politics and society. It is this commitment to the latter notion of rationality held implicitly in mainstream Enlightenment thought and the sophistry of slippage between it and the 'thin' notion of rationality—universal and also scientific—and the harms that western colonial rule perpetrated in its name that the so-called 'Occidentalists' with some justification (even in the views of the critics of these 'Occidentalists', whom they dub as 'enemies of the West', cf. Buruma and Margalit 2004) resent. And it is precisely against this background of the history of ideas that one should look for the rational epistemology (the 'thin' scientific rationality) of a tract like Gandhi's thought-provoking *Hind Swaraj* written more than a hundred years.

Gandhi insisted and argued at length that the notion of rationality, which was first formulated in the name of science in the seventeenth century and developed and modified to practical and public domains with the philosophers of the Enlightenment, had with it the predisposition to give rise to the horrors of modern industrial life, to destructive technological frames of

mind, to rank commercialism, to the surrender of spiritual casts of mind, and to the destruction of the genuine pluralism of traditional life before modernity visited its many tribulations upon India. As he often claimed, it is precisely because this more authentic pluralism was destroyed by modernity, that modernity had to impose a quite unsatisfactory form of secularist pluralism in a world that it had itself “disenchanted”, to use the Weberian rhetoric. Before this disenchantment, which for Gandhi had its origin in the very scientific rationality (‘thick’ rationality) that the critics of ‘Occidentalism’ applaud, there was no need for such artificial forms of secularized pluralism in Indian society. The pluralism was native, unselfconscious, and rooted.

Finally, and significantly, let us note that the critique of the mainstream ‘thick’ scientific rationality of the Enlightenment was not intrinsically external (e.g., latter day Gandhian or ‘Islamist’); it had been powerfully articulated within the dissenting Enlightenment tradition of Europe itself but this dissent has to be understood in a subtle way. As Bilgrami (2006: 3596) puts it, “It should be emphasized at the outset that the achievements of the “new science” in the seventeenth century were neither denied nor opposed by the critique I have in mind, and so the critique cannot be dismissed as Luddite reaction to the new science. What it opposed was a development in outlook that emerged in the philosophical surround of the scientific achievements. In other words, what it opposed was just the notion of ‘thick’ rationality... The dispute was about the very nature of nature and matter and, relatedly, therefore, about the role of deity, and of the broad cultural and political implications of the different views on these metaphysical and religious concerns”. We do not here have to go into the metaphysical and religious niceties of the dissenters’ arguments (e.g., Newton/Boyle vs. ‘pantheists’ like John Toland and convergence of their thoughts with spiritual-activists like Gandhi) but highlight the fact that they thought of the world not as brute and inert but as suffused with value. That they happened to think the source of such value was divine ought not to be the deepest point of interest for us. The point rather is that if it were laden with value, it would make normative (ethical and social) demands on one, whether one was religious or not. (We shall discuss in the next section the epistemological consequences of conceiving these normative demands as coming not merely from our own instrumentalities and subjective utilities.) The image is that of an “enchanted” world requiring from us a normatively constrained engagement with it. If, on the contrary, the world was conceived as brute and disenchanted, distant and external to our own sensibility as in the ‘new science’, there could be no engagement with it; our observation of it could only take the form of mastery and control of something alien, with a view to satisfying the only source of value allowed by this outlook—our own utilities and gain.

Without going into the details of the dissenters’ thought and its continuing relevance for anthropology as a human science, I may only mention

a remarkable number of literary and philosophical voices of the ‘radical’ Enlightenment—Blake, Shelley, William Morris, Whitman, Thoreau (and others of the non-traditional Left)—down to the heterodox Left in our own times, voices such as those of Noam Chomsky and Edward Thompson. These contemporary dissenters, inheritors of the “radical” Enlightenment, have refused to be complacent about the orthodox Enlightenment’s legacy of the ‘thick’ rationality that the early seventeenth century dissenters had warned against. To end this discussion of the deep and far-reaching consequences of the orthodoxy and heterodoxy of the Enlightenment, let me again cite Bilgrami (2006: 3597): “The conceptual sources that we have traced are various but they were not miscellaneous. Religion, capital, nature, metaphysics, rationality, science are diverse conceptual elements but they were tied together in a highly deliberate integration, that is to say in deliberately accruing worldly alliances... It is a travesty of the historical complexity built into the thick notion of scientific rationality... to think that it emerged triumphant in the face of centuries of clerical reaction only. That is the sort of simplification of intellectual history which leads one to oppose scientific rationality with religion... without any regard to the highly significant historical fact that it was the Anglican establishment that lined up with this thick notion of rationality in an alliance with commercial interests and it was the dissenting, egalitarian, radicals who opposed such ‘rationality’. It was this scientific rationality, seized upon by just these established religious and economic alliances, that was later central to the colonizing mentality that justified the rapacious conquest of distant lands”.

To sum up, my discussion above was geared to examining in some depth the historical and ideological context of anthropological knowledge-generation and to situate in this context the dissenting voice of one Indian epistemology, that of Hind Swaraj by Gandhi. I shall return to this last point later.

- b) Beyond subjectivity/objectivity; ethics and values: the epistemology of studying self and the other

In this second step of my argument concerning the anthropological epistemology, I connect the historical and ideological delineation of my previous discussion to certain key issues in the practice more specifically of socio-cultural anthropology. The fundamental issue at stake here is the epistemological perspective on the nature of what is being studied. In what follows, I shall shed initially, for heuristic purposes, the overtly political surround and tackle directly the ethical implications of the view of ‘matter’ espoused by the dissenters included in the ‘radical’ Enlightenment and by Gandhi. These anti ‘thick’ rationality philosophers argued that it is only because one takes matter to be “brute” and “stupid”, to use Newton’s own terms, that one would find it appropriate to conquer it with the most destructive of technologies with nothing but profit and material wealth as ends, and thereby destroy it both as a natural

and humanitarian environment for one's own habitation. In today's terms one might think that this point was a seventeenth century precursor to our ecological concerns but though there certainly was an early instinct of this kind, it was embedded in a more general point (as it was with Gandhi too), "a point really about how nature in an ancient and spiritually flourishing sense was being threatened" (Bilgrami 2006: 3596). I have already stated in section (a) how the dissenters thought of the world not as brute but suffused with value. It follows, therefore, that a 'scientific' methodology based on this conception would lead to a normative engagement with the world that is, such engagement would demand an ethical understanding of the matter. This view connects up directly—particularly because it relates to the study of human beings in the sciences—with the question of ethics in scientific rationality. The epistemological context of the following discussion is the anthropological and philosophical discourse in the study of the 'other' in socio-cultural anthropology.

Let me begin with a brief critique of the anthropological construction of the 'other' which is conceptualized as having "characteristics which are alien to the western tradition" (Pandian 1985: 6). Modern socio-cultural anthropology, hanging by the tail-coats of the orthodox Enlightenment view of 'thick' scientific rationality, began to contrast and alienate the cultures which were different. The primary role of anthropology was a process of inventing the 'human other' in order to develop a theory of humankind. Based on the notion of perceived differences, and through a cognitive process involving observation, collection of data and theorizing, socio-cultural anthropology posited a plethora of human others dominant among which were "the fossil other, savage other, black other and the ethnographic other" (Pandian 1985; cited in Sarukkai 1997: 1406). These 'others' stood, respectively, for an inferior human in the paradigm of native children as against the adult west (ideology of infantilism); backward African or even Indian people; the existence of blacks as evidence and validation of racism; and make ethnography 'work' as a reflection of economic and social dynamics of relationships of the dominant west and the subordinate non-west. According to a somewhat extreme critique of this early anthropology, in all these biased judgements in the name of the scientific discovery of the 'other' "eliminating prejudice would be eliminating anthropology" itself (Pandian 1985: 92). In the model of epistemology of the physical sciences it forsook the notion of responsibility from the objective domain. The point I am making here is foreshadowed in my discussion of section (a); to put it in the present context, it is the thematization of the 'other' in an ethical domain. It is the ethical imperative, an acknowledgement of the demand of the other that creates the responsibility towards the other. In anthropology the abnegation of this ethical responsibility is patent. The process of the anthropological 'stranger' seeking to define the native has made the native alien while upholding the autonomy of the western self. In this scenario of conventional ethnography/anthropology, the stranger who invades the

territory of the native takes over the spirit of the native by constructing him as the other. The nature of the other in this case is very clear: it is other as 'not-self'. "The initial anthropological other suffers continuously from this violence, a violence of the refiguration of the constitution of the native self... This other in this case is all the ethnographer is not. It is this otherness of the ethnographer's self that this kind of ethnographic study yields and not the self of the native. Coupled to this is the distancing of subjectivity in staking an epistemological claim to anthropological observation which further risks losing the 'essence' of the native's self. This activity is in its most fundamental sense an objectification of the natives which in the process ends up objectifying the impartial observer himself/herself" (Sarukkai 1997: 1407). Even in participant observation, the observing self continues to remain the epistemological 'not-other'. As long as the gaze of the observer searches out for structures untold and hidden by the natives, it becomes a violent act. Violence arises here in the sense of not heeding the ethical call of the other, the ethical call which demands responsibility of the observing self towards the native other. Thus in both these cases of anthropological observation, the other is constructed and not realized on a pre-categorical level. Only epistemological categories of the other as 'not-self' and the self as 'not-other' remain. Both these continue with the supposition that there is no responsibility to the other and remain deaf to its call. Such an abrogation of responsibility is only because the epistemological models are understood to be so. But this obviously does not serve the anthropological concern and opens anthropology to the charge of colonialism.

Postmodernist philosophers who have addressed the problem of alterity or the notion of the other (in relation to the self) enable the anthropologist to appreciate at once the phenomenological depth as well as certain insurmountable difficulties in our ethnographic methodology. For example, according to Degnin (1995) the ability to distinguish humans from animals is by acknowledging the human other as other, and this other is more fundamental than any human activity. It is the responsibility towards the other that even makes 'dialogical speech and reason' possible. In his reading of Levinas (1981), Degnin situates the importance of the 'face of the other' as evoking the subject. It is the call of the other as one like oneself which begets this ethical responsibility. Thus, "the other is the first truth, but not in a cognitive sense. Rather this truth is the experience of the ethical call that eventuates prior to and is constitutive of reason, metaphysics and discourse" (Degnin 1995). This leads to the crisis of representing the other, an epistemological conundrum which the anthropologists have debated intensely since the late 1980s (cf. Clifford and Marcus 1986). From a philosophical angle, as Sarukkai (1997: 1407) puts it, "The deeper problem here is one of representation. The other is represented, and perhaps even constituted through this representation in the way of the subject. It is the process of representing the other which subsumes it into the intelligibility of the subject and negates its identity". As a next step, philosophers like Levinas (1981) draw us to the

recognition of the ethical (ethics not as ordinarily understood as system of morals and prescriptions), not a theory of ethics but of the orienting the subject towards acknowledging and responding to the 'ethical', before it is categorized by knowledge. Getting deeper into its philosophy, the Derridean 'differance' (Derrida 1978) would be an ideal word to describe this other—not only is the other different but it is also in perpetual postponement. Thus in order to be 'true' to the other, ethnography should base itself on the concept of 'differance' rather than one based on difference. Arguing in this vein, and positing the notion of 'trace' in order to understand the other—and the inevitability of trace pointing to the impossibility of having a 'final' reference which does not refer to anything else, a presence of absence marked through with the trace of the other, we come to the ethical directedness of deconstruction which above all becomes "an openness towards the other" (Kearney 1993).

It is a vexing problem for us ethnographers/anthropologists as to how one integrates the notion of ethical responsibility within an epistemological system. While there is no easy answer to this puzzle, a spin-off of the preceding philosophical discourse for us is in Sarukkai's (1997: 1408) words "it opens us to the illusion of complete and closed description of any 'object' of inquiry. It also suggests that anthropology should find different paradigms of knowledge which are based on the critique of western metaphysics."

As socio-cultural anthropology moves away from being a study primarily of the strange and the exotic to the study of the 'self', the obverse of our long heritage of critical engagement with the other can drive home a salutary epistemological advantage. Anthropological studies of 'other-in-the-self' and of 'self-in-the-other' can be fruitfully undertaken by incorporating autobiography and fiction, respectively, in the repertoire of our methodology. A move such as this would also recover the anthropologists' lost anchorage to the humanities. Further, it would bridge the chasm in certain anthropological quarters between western and non-western (sometimes articulated as foreign and indigenous) methodologies. As I have argued elsewhere (Jain 1998a), if our phenomenal world is being increasingly shaped by interculturalization rather than acculturation, then the 'in-between' (subsumed sometimes in the trope of hybridity) could well inform and augment also our anthropological epistemology of the present and the future.

c) The practice of cultural translation in social anthropology

This is my third and final methodological step in exploring anthropological epistemology for our times. In this exploration we move even closer than in section (b) to the consideration of a time-tested practice in social anthropology, namely that of cultural translation *a' la* Evans-Pritchard, Godfrey Lienhardt and their students at Oxford who succeeded by repudiating the then natural science model of observing, classifying, typology-building, and generalizing into laws the comparatively collected ethnographic data for social phenomena and institutional facets thereof, viz., kinship, religion,

political systems etc. Godfrey Lienhardt's paper, "Modes of Thought", is possibly one of the most subtle and the earliest example of the use of the notion of translation explicitly to describe a central task of social anthropology. "The problem of describing to others how members of a remote tribe think then begins to appear largely as one of translation, of making the coherence primitive thought has in the languages it really lives in, as clear as possible in our own" (Lienhardt 1954: 97). Let me here note briefly that Lienhardt's use of the word "translation" refers not to linguistic matter per se, but to "modes of thought" that are embodied in such matter. To take a few quick steps in the direction that we are now following, the shifting of the focus of anthropological/ethnographic searchlight from exotic and primitive societies to what are generally called 'our own' societies (including, for example, tribal societies in India) brings about a radical transformation in the practice of cultural translation from that in the study of colonial to post-colonial societies, communities and culturally diverse groups in general. M.N. Srinivas (1996: 656-657) has commented on it in somewhat implicit terms about this change as reflected in the Indian anthropologists' study of cultural differences between rural and urban, tribal and peasant, or even between different castes living in close proximity in common neighbourhood such as the one where Srinivas himself (the anthropologist) grew up in the city of Bangalore. Sarukkai (1997: 1408) has mentioned the same transformation in respect of the nuanced contrast between an Indian anthropologist's and a foreign anthropologist's study of an Indian tribal group. However, it is not really necessary to draw a sharp line between an Indian and a foreign anthropologist. What has actually happened in this methodological transformation is nothing else than the new dialectic between the study of the 'self' and the 'other' that we analyzed in section (b). Whereas more commonly this transformation is seen as the absorption of Indian anthropology into sociology, I would here insist that this paradigmatic shift is essentially anthropological, a shift that I earlier described as the obverse of the colonial anthropology's focus predominantly on the study of the self through the other to the post-colonial focus on the study of the other through the self. As I have argued in some detail in some of my substantive writing (Jain 1998: 352; 2002: 141-142), it marks the vindication of the anthropological methodology of cultural translation in a new key, overcoming the debilitating arguments against it (cf. Asad 1968: 141-164) as being confined to an anachronistic colonial anthropology. This is also the principal reason why the western angst epitomized in the 'crisis of representation' (cf. Clifford and Marcus 1986) passed by Indian anthropology without even a ripple.

Current Trends and Future Anthropology

In the foregoing I have probably sketched an over-optimistic scenario of socio-cultural anthropology in India. To be on the side of caution, let me retrace my steps somewhat and suggest that the transformation that I have

spoken about is only partly visible in the present though it augurs well for the future. What I mean by sounding a note of circumspection is occasioned by the oft-repeated and somewhat justified accusation that neo-colonialism still has a grip on the anthropology and anthropologists of India. In my view the diagnosis of such a malignancy in certain varieties of anthropology in India needs to be carried a step further into time, viz., right into the first decade of the new millennium. In global terms, this conjuncture may properly be described as the aura of neo-liberalism that I may phrase as the 'slum dog millionaire syndrome'. To put it cryptically for Indian anthropology/ethnography, this conjuncture is revealed in the *poverty* of our definitions and priorities and the *richness* of borrowings and imitations. One of the early intimations of the symptoms of this malaise was presented briefly but with prescience in an article published way back in 1968 (Uberoi 1968: 119-23). Have we attained a modicum of 'swaraj' in our anthropological epistemology (see my earlier intimations about the centrality of 'self' in this epistemology, not to be confused with alien tropes of individualism and identity that permeate popular contemporary social science discourse)? I shall illustrate my critique by one example.

"The Importance of Being Inconsistent" is the title of the Rajiv Kapur Memorial Lecture given recently at the India International Centre in New Delhi (Gupta 2008: 2-17). It is an assessment of Gandhi's sterling contribution to liberal democracy in India. One doesn't know whether it is a coincidence or a borrowing, the title of the lecture has an uncanny resonance with the central notion and title, "the virtues of inconsistency", in the American social scientist Craig Calhoun's essay in the entirely different context of the pluralistic ethos of contemporary Europe's political and socio-cultural identity (Calhoun, 2001: 35-55). My critique of Gupta's contribution is twofold: first, what are his arguments for Gandhi's "inconsistency", and second, what exactly is this 'liberal democracy' that Gandhi gave to India and is the panacea for the governance of modern Indian polity? Gupta's incomprehension of the traditional Indian concepts like *anekantavada* (the many-sidedness of truth) is amazing. That this philosophical concept had a profound effect on Gandhi's thought and action is widely acknowledged (see, for example, Basham 1971: 22-28) is something that Gupta seems to be unaware of, and which leads to his assuming the lack of a "full-blown philosophical system" in Gandhi. Further, the presumed chasm between theory and practice ("his position of straying away from a systematic philosophy but insisting more on practice", p.3) and Gupta's own valorization of (an American notion?) liberal democracy leads him to ridicule "empty gestures such (as) prayer meetings or spinning the *charkha*" (pp. 14-15). In relation both to Gandhi's 'consistency' and disillusionment with an imported notion of liberal democracy, we must lend our ears to hear his dissenting voice apropos the received view of the superiority of western industrial civilization and his steadfast commitment to *ahimsa*. It is amazing indeed that in his analysis of 'inconsistent' Gandhi, an absolutely foundational text

like *Hind Swaraj* (1909) eludes Gupta completely. Similarly Gupta is oblivious of the necessity to critically analyze the current U.S. projection of the notion of liberal democracy as a rationalization and legitimization of its cold war intellectual hegemony, almost a *non-sequitur* of democracy (cf. Bilgrami 2006: 3600).

Positive counterpoints

Can I suggest certain positive counterparts to the rather negative critique delineated in the foregoing that would salvage the aura of optimism indicated in my penultimate remarks? I shall end with three brief examples, the first from the recent writings of two Indian anthropologists struggling with the problem of defining and ameliorating tribal groups in contemporary India, and the second from recent researches on rural-urban-State interface and the third from my own continuing work on the anthropology of Indian diaspora.

Vinay Srivastava's (2008: 29-35) critique of the concept of 'tribe' in the draft national policy demolishes bit-by-bit the borrowed 'universalist' definition adopted by the framers of the national policy. He contextualizes tribes in India and their social, economic and cultural differentiations within the macro-framework of the tribals' self-identities and aspirations, issues of marginalization and mainstreaming, economic penury and public awareness. Birinder Pal Singh (2008: 58-65) tackles the thorny question of the ex-criminal tribes of Punjab by subjecting this issue to a thorough historical review-cum-critique; again, like Srivastava he does not succumb to the allure of didactic universalist definitions nor of the bureaucracy-induced official diagnosis and prediction concerning issues at hand. These are precisely the examples of trying to understand the tribes within a dual framework of 'self-in-the-other' and 'other-in-the-self'. Unlike the prejudices of those anthropologists who have tended to see the tribals as exclusively the 'other' and exotic, the anthropologists cited here squarely countenance the Indian reality where these marginally culturally different groups have nevertheless always been part of the Indic civilizational ethos. These works are the signposts of Indian anthropology in a new key and the harbingers of self-assured reconfigurations of the time-tested anthropological method of cultural translation.

In this brief presentation I do not have time to fully delineate current practices in the anthropology of India as they touch upon the rural-urban-State interface. We have intimations of fieldwork in contemporary rural Gujarat (Naz 2012: 97-101) where a young anthropologist successfully manoeuvres with multiple identities to penetrate the skin of outwardly hazardous communal politics. This informed "participant objectivation" (Bourdieu 2003: 281-293) signals a trend towards new ethnography where one notices the deployment of the techniques of reflexivity and "poetics" (Herzfeld 1985; 2001: 259-76) among respondents in the field that transcends, refines and amends the crude commonsensical divide between 'perceptions'

and 'reality' in popular politics that our media of mass communication regularly churn out. A poetic notion, in the technical sense concerns "the means in which significance is conveyed through actual performance... (S)ince it cuts across the boundary between speech and other forms of action, we can also let it dissolve for us the entirely artificial distinction between linguistic or symbolic and political concerns" (Herzfeld 1985: xiv). A similar trend of nuanced ethnographic reporting is evident in a brief field-based article on Karnataka rural scenario (Nair 2012: 24-26) where a combination of the tacit pursuit of neo-liberal developmental policies and state penetration in the lives of the villagers results in the articulation and support of categories that are ultimately counter-productive for radical social change. These evidences alert us to the conjuncture in India today and tomorrow where mere methodological reiteration of subaltern consciousness, supposedly untouched in rural and tribal areas by city and State influences, would no longer configure the space of anthropological enquiry. Partha Chatterjee, one of the pioneers of the subaltern school has recently recognized in a self-reflexive mood that the arm of State bureaucracy has touched the life worlds of the Indian masses sufficiently to prompt readjusting our sights towards the project of a post-subaltern approach (Chatterjee 2012: 44-49). More could be said about the significance of the visual, particularly iconographic and cinematic media, as data-base in the ethnography of the new conjuncture. However, at this stage I would encompass these present and future trends as reposing in the anthropological dialectic between 'self-in-the-other' and 'other-in-the-self' about which I spoke earlier.

As my third example, I touch upon only one aspect of my anthropological analysis of the Indian diaspora, namely, the contrast and dialectical relationship between what I call 'non-modern' civilizations and 'settlement societies'; the former like the Indic civilization, supplied immigrants to the latter—countries such as the former plantation colonies of western imperial powers, e.g., Mauritius, S. Africa, Trinidad and Tobago (and other countries of the Caribbean), Malaysia, Fiji etc. as well as to the 'New Societies', the colonizing countries and present-day multi-racial societies, viz., U.K. and increasingly other European nations, U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand etc. This global paradigm is anchored firmly in the *longue durée* (to use Ferdinand Braudel's concept) of a historical relationship between the Old and New World civilizations on the one hand and the post-1492 (i.e., post-Columbus) societies (my 'settlement societies') on the other hand. I have spelled out in my analytical writing the characteristics of this global classification and relationships and drawn out their implications for an understanding of difference and translation, hybridity and creolisation, and multiculturalism in the comparative study of Indian diaspora (cf. Jain 2010; 2011). The anthropological epistemology of this research is rooted in the human science approach—a blending of the social sciences and the humanities—that I have attempted to outline in the foregoing.

This leaves me with a final comment on the linkages in current anthropology of India with the natural sciences, viz., issues in the reconfiguration of a 'holistic' view of the discipline. In this respect we are beholden to our anthropological colleagues in specializations such as biological and archaeological anthropology. My own scientific bias (and this is not an oxymoron in the present universe of discourse) is that, to use Bilgrami's terms, while the 'thin' scientific rationality must inform the reconfiguration of holistic anthropology, the anachronistic/prejudicial/colonial and neo-colonial residues will have to be sieved out of the 'thick' scientific rationality that had contaminated socio-cultural anthropology in the past, particularly if it is found to infect the discipline to this day.

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In this presentation I have freely utilized the content of my earlier contribution, 'Anthropology in India as Human Science' In Ajit K. Danda and Dipali G. Danda (Editors), *Anthropology in India*, Kolkata: INCAA Occasional Papers 2010, Pp. 79-98.

This is the text of the Seventh D. N. Majumdar Endowment Lecture of 2012, under the auspices of the Department of Anthropology, University of Lucknow.