

## BOOK REVIEW

# Durkheim and Hubert in Brazil

João Marcelo Ehlert Maia

Joao.Maia@fgv.br

Benthien, Rafael, Miguel Palmeira and Rodrigo Turin (Eds.). 2016. *Hubert, Henri, Estudo Sumário da Representação do Tempo na Religião e na Magia*. São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo (=Biblioteca Durkheimiana vol. 2).

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Consolim, Márcia, Márcio de Oliveira e Raquel Weiss (Eds.). 2017. *Émile Durkheim, O Individualismo e os Intelectuais*. São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo (=Biblioteca Durkheimiana vol. 1)

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The so-called “classics” occupy a central position in many sociological communities around the world. The works of Karl Marx, Max Weber and Émile Durkheim have been taught to generations of students, and mastering these works is a crucial capital in the intellectual disputes that structure the academic field in different countries. As a peripheral country long exposed to hegemonic European culture, Brazil would not escape this fate. Weber is one of the most quoted authors in Ph.D. theses in Brazilian social sciences (Cunha Melo, 1997) and both he and Marx have been key intellectual sources for leading Brazilian scholars who have sought to explain the strange assemblage of modernity and traditionalism that shaped Brazilian capitalism (Schwarz, 1998; Werneck Vianna, 1999). Even high school textbooks on sociology have chapters about “the classics.”

Despite this continuous interest in the classical texts, Brazilians for a long time relied on second-hand editions and dubious translations, which contributed to a canonical approach that lacked historiographical reflections about the social history of the texts. Many classical works did not have a Portuguese version until the last decades of the twentieth century. *Economy and Society*, for instance, was read by Brazilian students in the 1950s and 1960s in the legendary translation published by Fondo de Cultura Económica (Zabludovsky, 2002), which prompted a Brazilian sociologist writing in the mid-1970s to call this famous Mexican translation a “key book” in Brazilian sociological thinking (Dias, 1974).

However, in the last years, there has been a growing body of scholarship devoted to the history of the discipline, which has given the sociological community in the country new translations and critical editions that have greatly improved teaching and researching. In 2004, the Brazilian sociologist Antônio Flávio Pierucci coordinated a new critical edition of “The Protestant Ethic,” translated from German by José Mariani de Macedo (Weber, 2004). This edition depicted the complex history of the text and highlighted all the changes and modifications made by Weber after the first version, which was edited in 1904–1905. Besides, Pierucci carefully detailed Weberian concepts and avoided Parsons’ terminology. The publishing house Cosac & Naify (sadly bankrupted in 2015) released several classical works in anthropology in luxury editions accompanied by excellent commentaries and introductions. As a result, the Brazilian audience can now read the four volumes of Levi-Strauss’ *Mythologiques* in great critical editions. It is within this context that a group of Brazilian researchers set out on an ambitious project: to publish critical and bilingual editions of key texts from the so-called “French School of Sociology.” *L’individualisme et les intellectuels*, by Émile Durkheim, and *Étude sommaire de la représentation du temps dans la religion et la magie*, by Henri Hubert, are the first results of their work.

These books are the first outputs of the Brazilian Centre for Durkheimian Studies, which has links to similar centers around the world dedicated to the study of Durkheim’s oeuvre. The Centre is directed by Professor Rachel Weiss from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, who wrote a Ph.D. thesis on the Philosophy of Morality in Durkheim. Weiss edits the volume on individualism and intellectuals with Márcia Consolim from Federal University of Sao Paulo and Márcio de Oliveira from the Federal University of Paraná. The volume on Hubert is edited by Rafael Benthien from the Federal University of Paraná, Miguel Soares Palmeira from the University of São Paulo, and Rodrigo Turin from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. This group of sociologists and historians is highly qualified for the mission, as many have experienced academic seasons in France and thus have developed deep connections with the French intellectual field. Weiss and Oliveira had already co-authored a book on Durkheim, while Consolim has been researching the history of French sociology in the early twentieth century since 2010. Benthien is a historian who has investigated the connections between archaeologists and sociologists in the famous *L’Année Sociologique*, while Palmeira and Turin have done archival research and written on the history of historiography.

The volumes are edited by the publishing house of the University of Sao Paulo, which is a relevant fact. The so-called “USP” was established in 1933, and the first professors of Philosophy, Languages, and Literature and Human Sciences were French intellectuals. Lévi-Strauss, Fernand Braudel, and Roger Bastide were some of the many young scholars drafted by the Paulista elites to become professors in São Paulo, and as a result French intellectual culture established deep roots in that city.

The two books follow the same format: After a brief presentation by the editors and a note on which version is being translated, the text is rendered in Portuguese in a way that the reader can check the French original text on the opposite page. There is also a commentary

section, which presents a collection of articles authored by Brazilian and non-Brazilian scholars about Hubert and Durkheim, and an appendix with historical materials, such as letters, pictures, or reviews published during the lifetime of both authors.

The volume dedicated to Hubert brings together contemporary analysis by Christine Lorre, Jean-François Bert, and Rafael Benthien, and articles authored by coeval colleagues Marcel Mauss, Jean Lafitte, and Salomon Reinach. The reviews were carefully chosen so that the readers can have a glimpse of the original reception of the work and the kind of intellectual exchanges amid French intellectual circles at that time. The contemporary analyses focus on different features of Hubert's work and life. Lorre writes about Hubert's archeological research and his job at the Musée des Antiquités Nationales (MAN); Bert briefly analyses the relations between Hubert and the group behind *L'Année Sociologique*, exploring Hubert's contributions to major works authored by Mauss; Benthien, during his turn, delivers a theoretical essay on the relations between Hubert's concept of time and the philosophy of Aristotle. The volume closes with a moving autobiographical note written by Hubert to his son before leaving to take part in the First World War.

The volume on Durkheim's text on individualism presents to the Brazilian audience a central piece for understanding the relationship between sociology and public life. It starts with a good presentation by Consolim, Oliveira and Weiss, which outlines the history of the text itself, the political battles in the Third Republic, and the divisions within French cultural system brought on by the emergence of the Dreyfus affair. The original text is presented with its original notes, and it is followed by the commentary section. Louis Pinto writes about the "universalism" in Durkheim's discourse; Consolim analyses the social history of the *Revue des deux mondes* and *Revue Bleue*, two central magazines in nineteenth-century French culture; Susan Jones explains the meaning of individualism in Durkheim's theory; Weiss outlines a general presentation of the text and its place in Durkheim's oeuvre; William Miller expands on the main ideas of the text and claims its contemporary relevance. The section with historical materials includes the original article by Ferdinand Brunetière, which prompted a vigorous response from various *intellectuels*, and a very short text by Durkheim on the role of intellectual elites in democratic societies. One must notice that Brunetière's piece is presented with the footnotes published in its second version, which came to light after the author was severely criticized for his defense of the French Army and its attack on the intellectuals.

The result of this pioneering work is definitely positive. There are very few critical editions of classical texts in Brazil that present such a meticulous historical work as the one done by Weiss, Oliveira, Consolim, Benthien, Palmeira, and Turin. The collective nature of the editorial work is remarkable in the two volumes, and the texts written by the editors themselves show a coherent sociological approach, highly influenced by Pierre Bourdieu's theories. In Brazilian sociological community, Bourdieu's prestige is enormous, and his work is regarded as almost a synonym for the "sociology of the intellectuals." These two volumes are a nice example of the strengths of this intellectual tradition.

However, one must acknowledge a few weak points. First of all, the volume on Durkheim is a bit repetitive, as many analysts present the Dreyfus affair in great detail, which makes the reading quite tiring. Some texts address the same questions in a similar fashion, which makes them redundant, a problem that does not happen in Hubert's volume. One also misses analyses on the circulation of Hubert and Durkheim's work in Brazil, which could provide great insights for the readers about the historical dissemination of these works in a comparative perspective. Regardless, these are very small problems, and the final result is nevertheless positive. I hope that the group involved in this initiative continues to work together, as we certainly need more solid historical work on the so-called classical works of sociology.

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