

## ON THE TRACES OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES AT UFMG: SOME NOTES AND BRIEF REMINISCENCES<sup>1</sup>

*Léa Freitas Perez*<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** Teaching and research on religion is an established field of studies in the Sociology and Anthropology Department at the Federal University of Minas Gerais' Philosophy and Human Sciences College. The text pursues, in the thickness of history, certain moments and events which have framed it.

**Keywords:** teaching and research, history, anthropology of religion, sociology of religion, UFMG.

*Le sens doit attendre d'être dit ou écrit our s'habiter lui-même et devenir ce qu'à différer de soit il est: le sens* (Jacques Derrida).

Teaching and research on religion is an established field of studies in the Sociology and Anthropology Department at the Federal University of Minas Gerais' (UFMG) Philosophy and Human Sciences College.

From the outset, it is important to highlight the fact that this will not be a linear history. As suggested by the title above, the intention is to pursue, in the thickness of history, certain moments and events which have framed the religion field, particularly anthropology of religion, at UFMG<sup>1</sup>.

A fundamental landmark is the research and teaching activities developed by French anthropologist Pierre Sanchis who, from 1978 to 1996, taught and researched at UFMG's Sociology and Anthropology Department.

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<sup>1</sup> Some people, to whom I am immensely grateful, have contributed to this text. Pierre Sanchis honored and moved me, by writing some notes and recalling some precious reminiscences. Professor Candice Vidale Souza (PUC-MG) provided important information on the history of anthropology in the state of Minas Gerais. UFMG social sciences students Pablo Juan Cândido da Silva and Tito Tavares Coelho da Silva helped researching the data.

<sup>2</sup> Professor at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

<sup>3</sup> Choosing these moments followed disciplinary remarking options.

Simultaneously to his position at UFMG, Sanchis has also been since 1976 a member of the Institute of Religious Studies (ISER). His ISER participation has often been, though not always, related to his activities at UFMG – or at least, as he used to say, it implied “a participation from Belo Horizonte”.<sup>4</sup>

Pierre Sanchis headed ISER from 1982 to 1985, after being a member of its Executive Committee. He is also a member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Religião & Sociedade*, and was a member of *Cadernos do ISER*'s Writing Committee, as well as of the Editorial Board of the journal's “Religion and Modernity” series. Also at ISER, he coordinated the Study Group on Catholicism, later on renamed Study Group on Syncretism.

At ISER, mostly connected to his work at UFMG and sponsored by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), Sanchis conducted eleven investigations with an analytical and reflexive focus on Brazilian Catholicism. Catholicism in Brazil was then approached both in its institutional (for instance, relations between the Church and grassroots communities, and between State and Church) and popular (particularly emphasizing black religiosity's different manifestations) faces. Syncretism, both as a theoretical issue for anthropology and as an ethnographic reality for the researcher, occupied a good portion of his inquiry. One of these investigations, which resulted in three edited books on Catholicism (Sanchis, 1992a; 1992b; 1992c), was carried out by a team of twenty researchers, from thirteen Brazilian and two American universities. At CNPq, he was also the Brazilian coordinator of three international (Brazil and France) investigations on religious and ethnic identities. Brazil, Portugal, France do not evade the sharp eye of the researcher, of the *romaria*<sup>5</sup> pilgrim and of the

<sup>4</sup> Translator's note: Belo Horizonte, capital of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, is UFMG's home base.

<sup>5</sup> Translator's note: The “romaria”, as will be noted below, was one of Sanchis' main research interests. It is a type of popular Catholic pilgrimage, towards a particular saint's shrine or the site where a miracle was performed. The *romeiros* (pilgrims) normally depart from multiple places, and may walk for several days until reaching their destiny.

foreign traveler (three *personae* into one). His intriguing analyses lead us through the religious universe, passing through the different and diverse cultural worlds which make up collective life. Also worthy of note are his investigations on sin; Equator and Atlantic; Brazilian-style evil; and passion in Brazilian popular consciousness.

In 1991, Sanchis held a post-doctoral appointment at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* in Paris. There, he worked with the Sociology of Religion Group of the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS).

At UFMG, Sanchis continuously performed activities on teaching (undergraduate and graduate), research and administration, since his arrival in 1978 until his premature retirement in 1996. In 1999, the university awarded him the title of Professor Emeritus – the first professor from the Sociology and Anthropology Department to be bestowed such an honor.

Before continuing, a short note on the history of UFMG is in order:

The creation of a university in the state of Minas Gerais was already part of the *Inconfidentes*<sup>6</sup> project. It was finally accomplished in 1927, when the University of Minas Gerais (UMG), a state-subsidized public institution, was founded. It resulted from the merging of four previously-existing higher education schools in Belo Horizonte.<sup>7</sup> UMG remained within the state sphere until 1949, when it was federalized. Its current name – Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) – was adopted in 1965.

The Philosophy College was founded on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1939. It was incorporated into the University of Minas Gerais in 1948. Its current name – Philosophy and Human Sciences College (FAFICH) – dates back from

<sup>4</sup>Translator's note: Inconfidência Mineira (Minas Conspiracy) was an elite independence movement which took place in Minas Gerais in 1789, influenced by the French Revolution ideals and the independence of the thirteen American colonies, against oppression from the Brazilian ruling metropolis, Portugal.

<sup>5</sup>It is worth recalling that, in Brazil, university was implemented with the Republic (starting in 1889) as the continuation of a process which had begun during the Empire (1822-1889), when the first higher education schools were opened in the country. In the state of Minas Gerais, the first higher education institution was the Pharmacy School founded in 1839 in its former capital, Ouro Preto.

the University Reform implemented by the 5.540/68 Act. Ever since its original facilities at the *Acaiaca* Building (downtown Belo Horizonte), through the famous and beloved building at Carangola Street (Santo Antônio neighborhood), to its current modern facilities at UFMG's Pampulha campus (to where it moved in 1990), FAFICH has survived many and significant changes.

The Sociology and Anthropology Department (one of the six current departments at FAFICH) resulted from the merging of two undergraduate courses in 1967: the Economic Science College's Sociology and Politics and Public Management Bachelor's Degree, and the Philosophy and Human Science College's Social Sciences Teaching Degree. The Department's faculty has currently twenty eight members, of whom only eight are anthropologists. SOA (as it is fondly called), together with the Political Science Department, is in charge of the Social Sciences Undergraduate Course at UFMG.

Before the aforementioned university reform, there were two social sciences undergraduate courses at the (by then) University of Minas Gerais. The reform merged both, creating the current undergraduate (Teaching and Bachelor's Degree) Social Sciences Course, which has as its majors the three classical fields: Anthropology, Sociology, and Political Science.

The first records of higher education anthropology disciplines taught in Belo Horizonte date back from "the school year of 1941, in the Philosophy College courses" (Souza, 2004, p. 1). The oldest reference on religion found until now in anthropology programs is to the Anthropology and Ethnology Chair taught by Orsini de Castro (a dermatologist and first Anthropology Professor at the Philosophy College in the 1950's) in geography and history courses, as well as in the social sciences course. There, religion appears, together with idiom, arts, science and writing, under the item related to "spiritual culture", as well as in the item "historical factors of cultural formation", side by side with tradition (Souza, 2004, p. 15).

Sociology and political science have long enjoyed a prevailing position *vis-à-vis* anthropology. Such a privilege was established, among others, by the creation of the Political Science (1970) and Sociology (1980) Master's Programs, as well as of the Human Sciences Doctoral Program: Sociology and Politics (1993).

This hierarchical subordination (to use Dumontian semantics) of anthropology did not refrain its professors from actively and productively engaging in the undergraduate and graduate courses. In Sociology MA, for instance, anthropologists have participated by regularly offering elective courses, carrying out research and advising Master's theses on the sociology of culture subfield (where religious studies were included), running thesis seminars, taking part in examining committees (both of students' theses and prospective students' applications), and even performing managerial tasks.

The place of anthropology in graduate studies has undergone significant *renversement* (Dumont again called for) with the creation of its own graduate program in 2005 as part of a wider reformulation of UFMG's Social Sciences Graduate Program. The PPGAN, which offers MA degrees in two subfields, Social Anthropology and Archaeology, has eight research lines, one of them being anthropology of religion.

With the creation of the PPGAN, at long last an Anthropology of Religion course could be offered in an Anthropology MA. This occurred in 2007's first semester; the inaugural class was ministered by Pierre Sanchis, and was entitled *Brazilian culture and religion*.

As for undergraduate studies, anthropology's subordinate position *vis-à-vis* sociology and political science has shifted, following a curricular reform in 1990. This reform created a specialized undergraduate formation split into the three majors; each came to have an equal amount and distribution of mandatory courses. A chief change introduced by this reform was the inclusion of a final monograph requirement – in which anthropology's participation has been increasing in quantity and quality.

We can now close this parenthesis and regain the common thread. Pierre Sanchis was a member of several of the university's collegiate organs, such as those in Sociology MA and in Philosophy BA, the Sociology and Anthropology Department's Chamber and UFMG's Graduate Council. He also coordinated FAFICH's Extension.

Sanchis taught multiple disciplines in the Social Sciences Undergraduate Course and Sociology MA course. Among these, there were: anthropological theory, political anthropology, introduction to anthropology, sociological and anthropological theory, thesis seminar, and subfield seminar. He

conducted several researches, among which are worthy of note: *The official pastoral of the Catholic Church and popular Catholicism*, *Romarias from Minas Gerais*, *the Catholic Church's ideologies on Brazil: 1870-1970*, *The Pope in Belo Horizonte*, and *The Congonhas do Campo Romaria*.

The focus of his inquiry into the Catholic Church's ideologies was the relations between Brazilian Army and Brazilian Clergy around the "national model" management. Sanchis reminds us that in those days (between the end of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's) there was a high student demand for elective courses on theory of religion, especially concerning the relations between religion and politics in Brazilian society history. An example was his course on Gramsci and Brazilian messianic movements. Such a trend is understandable, given the spirit of those effervescent times which, among others, fostered the tense and complex encounter (in academia and society) between religion and politics, as well as debates on themes such as alienation and emancipation.

Research in the city of Congonhas (Minas Gerais) was carried out by around forty students, as well as by other colleagues from the Department. One of them, sociologist Ronaldo de Noronha, recalled: "We spent several days sleeping in the school, on student desks. We did participant observation, and applied questionnaires to the *romeiros* (pilgrims). I can still remember how enthusiastic we were!" This inquiry also included working on ecclesiastic archives in the colonial town of Mariana, in order to unearth socio-historical data on Congonhas. Among its outcomes is a conference in a Study Center on Church History in Latin America (CEHILA) symposium.

The significant presence of students in Sanchis' research activities was also manifested in the project on Pope John Paul II's visit to Belo Horizonte, in which more than a hundred of them took part. These students – all volunteers and coming from diverse FAFICH's courses, who had been previously prepared for research by means of "several study meetings" – were "since the early-morning hours scattered along the path leading from the airport to Pope Square".<sup>8</sup> This investigation combined "participant

<sup>8</sup> *Praçado Papa* is the name by which the public leisure area where Pope John Paul II said Mass during his 1980 visit to Brazil came to be known.

observation, multiple interviews, and two questionnaires: one before, the other after the Pope's Mass and speeches. During the previous week, observation in churches (and cult places), both catholic and evangelical, had been carried out, in order to delve into the themes used by these institutions to prepare (or warn) the population".

Pierre Sanchis published, among others, numerous papers in national and international journals, book chapters, and the Portuguese (1983) and French (1997) versions of his PhD thesis on the Portuguese *romaria*. He also edited volumes on Catholicism (Sanchis, 2001).

Sanchis also took active part in academic meetings such as the MERCOSUR's Religion Social Scientists Association, the Americanists' Society, Brazilian Association of Social Science Research and Graduate Studies (ANPOCS), Brazilian Anthropological Association, 3<sup>rd</sup> Luso-Brazilian Social Sciences Congress, as well as CEHILA conferences. In these meetings, he delivered almost one hundred papers and presentations.

Pierre Sanchis was also a member of many PhD and MA examining committees, among which stand out those of Arno Vogel (MA) and Luis Felipe Baeta Neves (PhD). He advised eight MA and one PhD theses. Among the former, three were on religion. One of them is Mônica do Nascimento Barros (1995), the first Brazilian MA thesis to deal with the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God.<sup>9</sup>

Likewise, his activities in the Sociology and Anthropology Department involved organizing several seminars and symposia. One of them was the seminar held for launching the special issue of the journal *Religião & Sociedade*, where the theme Marxism and Religion triggered a heated debate among those present.

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<sup>9</sup> Translator's note. The UCKG (from Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, IURD) is a neo-pentecostal church created during the seventies which, after rapid growth within the country, is continuously spreading worldwide (so far to "at least 100 countries", according to the Church's website). Although it blossomed especially in Portuguese-speaking nations, it exists also in Anglo-Saxon countries such as the USA – where the first UCKG abroad was opened in 1980.

Other scholars who also worked with Anthropology of Religion were contemporary to Sanchis at UFMG: Saul Martins, Romeu Sabará, Cleonice Pitangui, Renato Ortiz, and Paula Montero. Ana Lúcia Modesto is the only member of this group who remains active at UFMG.

Saul Martins dealt chiefly with black and popular cultures in Minas Gerais. He studied the so-called folklore, an area in which he frequently ran into religion. Such is the case of his research on *Congada*.<sup>10</sup> A complex and polemic character, he kept correspondence with important Brazilian intellectuals such as Eduardo Galvão, Câmara Cascudo and René Ribeiro, among others (Souza, 2006, p. 283). The plentiful and rich material he gathered was assembled by himself in a museum which holds his name, in the town of Vespasiano (Minas Gerais). His work was then undertaken by his disciple Romeu Sabará, who worked with *Congada*, especially among the Arturo people. He also inspired the *Congo Mass*, together with a group from the Catholic University of Minas Gerais. Cleonice Pitangui worked in the field of black popular religiosity. She studied *Congada* and Afro-Brazilian cults in Minas Gerais.

Likewise, Renato Ortiz, at the time he was a Professor at UFMG (1977-1984), also worked with popular culture and Afro-Brazilian religiosity. During that period, he held two postdoctorate appointments, one in Columbia and the other in New York. Ortiz published several articles (in Portuguese and French), as well as book chapters, with special focus on popular culture and national memory, ideology, and religious syncretism. Two of his most important books, *The black witch's white death* (1978) and *Fragmented consciousness* (1980), by now classics in the study of Afro-Brazilian religion, date back from this period. He also edited and wrote the introduction ("Searching for a sociology of practice"; Ortiz, 1983) to an issue dedicated to Pierre Bourdieu in the prestigious series *Great Social Scientists*, coordinated by Florestan Fernandes. Besides that, Ortiz took active part in academic

<sup>10</sup> Translator's note: "Congada", a regional manifestation of Brazilian popular Catholicism, is based on the worshipping of Our Lady of Rosario by black peoples. During the ritual coronation of the Congo King (or Queen), life conditions of black slaves under colonial rule is dramatized.

meetings, notably in the Brazilian Association of Social Science Research and Graduate Studies (ANPOCS) and the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science (SBPC), as well as in the Americanists' Congress and the Conference of Latin-American History.

Paula Montero was a Professor at UFMG between 1978 and 1986. She translated some of Bourdieu's texts included in the collection edited by Ortiz. In 1983, she defended her thesis on magical healing in *umbanda*<sup>11</sup> at the University of São Paulo (USP), advised by Eunice Durham. This work, published as a book in 1985, has become a classic reference in this field of studies. In 1985, she published another central reference in anthropology of religion, in which she presents the main approaches to magic in anthropological thought.

Ana Lúcia Modesto, herself a former Sanchis' student, is an Anthropology Professor at UFMG since 1990. Currently, her teaching and research focuses on the relations between cinema and religion.

When Sanchis was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus by UFMG, the *Religion Social Sciences Meeting – turn of the millennium and religious pluralism in Brazilian society: Homage to Pierre Sanchis* was held. This event expressed what could be called an institutional and academic resuming of religious studies at UFMG.

In 2003, the texts presented at the seminar were released in a special issue of the journal *Teoria & Sociedade*.<sup>12</sup> It is worth remarking, specially if the relatively long hierarchical subordination of anthropology within the whole of the three areas is taken into account, that the first of the journal's series of special issues was dedicated precisely to anthropology of religion, and as a tribute to Pierre Sanchis' work. This issue includes texts from Carlos Alberto Steil, Carlos Rodrigues Brandão, João Batista Libânio, Otávio Velho, Patrícia Birman, Paula Montero, Pedro Ribeiro, Regina Novaes, and Rita Segato. Some of these people are among the most important intellectuals of religion in Brazil, all of them Sanchis' interlocutors, and yet others, research

<sup>11</sup>Translator's note: "Umbanda" is a highly syncretic religion which merges features from Afro-Brazilian cults, Catholicism, Kardecist spiritism, and indigenous beliefs.

<sup>12</sup> Dating from 1997, *Teoria & Sociedade* is a joint enterprise of UFMG's Sociology and Anthropology Department, and the Political Science Department.

colleagues. This publication issue also offers two texts by Sanchis: one sets the charter of Brazilians' religions, and the other is a memorial (Sanchis, 2003a; 2003b).

Hence, from 2000 on, religious studies at UFMG enter an era of simultaneously quantitative and qualitative growth – both in sociology and in anthropology.

In sociology of religion, the work (in teaching and research) of professors Alexandre Cardoso and Renan Springer de Freitas are worthy of note. The former deals with sociology of magic, especially magic-religious organizations and modern magic (theme of his PhD thesis defended at the University of São Paulo in 1999). The latter has been dedicating his work to epistemology and sociology of religion.

In 2000, a Religion Study Center (CER) was founded at UFMG and named after Pierre Sanchis. Creation of this CER-Pierre Sanchis institution ushered in another scenario in the relations between sociology and anthropology, since it was a joint enterprise of both disciplines. They were represented, respectively, by Professors Alexandre Cardoso and Léa Freitas Perez. Some social sciences undergraduate students (André Tavares dos Santos, Cláudio Antônio Cardoso Leite, Flávia Ferreira Pires, Kátia Helena de Jesus, Rita de Fátima Alves Nogueira, and Rogério da Silva Paulino), as well as one sociology MA student (Luciana de Oliveira) are also part of this study center.

So far, CER has already carried out four research projects: two on youngsters and religion, and two on feasts and celebrations.

The first of these, which stands at the very origin of the CER creation, was called "Religion and politics among social sciences students". It was nationally coordinated by Professor Carlos Steil, from the Religious Studies Nucleus of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), and made operational by means of a partnership with the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Vale dos Sinos University (UNISINOS), and the Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS). It was inspired on a previous experience by UFRJ Professor Regina Novaes in the nineties. At UFMG, the research team was made up by the aforementioned founders of the study center. It was a quantitative survey using questionnaires.

The second investigation – “Religion, politics and culture among Minas Gerais youth”, sponsored by the Research Support Foundation of the State of Minas Gerais (FAPEMIG) – was conducted in partnership with the Graduate Program on Religion Science of the Federal University of Juiz de Fora, coordinated by Professor Marcelo Camurça.<sup>13</sup> It used a double and articulated approach of survey and focal group.

The overall outcomes of these two inquiries are presented, respectively, in *Debates do NER*, (Steil & Herrera, 2001) and in *Numen*, 2004<sup>14</sup> Both point to a positive identification of Minas Gerais youngsters with religiosity, although being religious, having a religious confession and believing in religious symbols are not necessarily situated in the same plane and at the same hierarchical level. As a consequence, interest in religion greatly outweighs interest in politics.

The third investigation, “Feast and civilization in the tropics” sought to broaden the reflection scope on the organization of Brazilian society by analyzing feast, regarded as one of the privileged ways of expressing the social tie’s complexity of forms.<sup>15</sup> The more general outcomes of this inquiry were published as articles (Perez, 2000; 2002; 2003; 2005).

The still-unfinished fourth research is basically a more detailed unfolding flowing from the third. Entitled “Charting feasts in Minas Gerais – a mapping-out by their travelers and chroniclers”,<sup>16</sup> it is sponsored by FAPEMIG

<sup>13</sup>The UFMG team carrying out this research was made up of Professor Léa Freitas Perez and social sciences undergraduate students Daniela Portella Sampaio, Fernanda Cimini Salles, Marcos Arcanjo de Assis, Pablo Juan Cândido da Silva, and Rogério Jerônimo Barbosa.

<sup>14</sup> These researches were widely debated in academic events such as the 4th Anthropology Meeting of the MERCOSUR (2001, symposium no 5 “Youth, social sciences and religion”, coordinated by Carlos Alberto Steil and Léa Freitas Perez), the 24th Brazilian Anthropology Meeting (2004, research forum “Youth, culture and urban space: religion and politics”, coordinated by Rosilene Alvim and Léa Freitas Perez), the 13th Journeys on Religious Alternatives in Latin America (2005, work group “Youth and religion: modulations and articulations with culture, sociality and politics”, coordinated by Carla Coelho de Andrade and Léa Freitas Perez).

<sup>16</sup> Professor Léa Freitas Perez and social sciences students Amélia Corrêa Passos, Kátia Helena de Jesus, and Rosana Alexandre dos Santos, who held CNPq and FAPEMIG undergraduate scholarships, have taken part in this research.

and CNPq, and tackle a core conceptual question: what is the feast, what is its place in collective life, especially in a country like Brazil (which is, after all, the country of carnival, and is proud of it). The empirical object of study are the religious feasts (more traditional and characteristic expressions of the phenomenon) in Minas Gerais (a privileged space where the baroque feast blossomed, one of the most influential cultural matrices of Brazilian culture) between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, as they were seen, described and analyzed by travelers and chroniclers who passed by this region, especially its mining zone.

These investigations, their developments and deployments have been debated in several academic events, and have fostered a good number of social sciences undergraduate monographs and MA theses.<sup>17</sup>

A spin-off branch of CER's activities is the organization of academic events, especially its annual Conference Cycle, to which have already been invited: Antônio Flávio Pierrucci, Cecília Mariz, Emerson Giumbelli, Fátima Tavares, Marcelo Camurça, Maria das Dores Campos Machado, Otávio Velho, Pablo Séman, Reginaldo Prandi, Regina Novaes, Vagner Gonçalves da Silva, and the late beloved Vitória Peres.

Since CER's inception, eighteen undergraduate monographs (twelve of which on anthropology of religion, and six on sociology of religion) and seven Sociology MA theses (four on sociology of religion and three on anthropology) have been defended.<sup>18</sup> These pieces of work dealt with various current issues relating to religion in Brazil and Minas Gerais, from feast religious phenomena (*congado*, *catopês*) to the New Era, charismatic

<sup>17</sup> Among other events: the 24th Brazilian Anthropology Meeting (2004, symposium "Feast in perspective and as perspective", coordinated by Léa Freitas Perez); the Colloquium Feasts and Sociabilities (2006, opening conference and research communication); the 25th Brazilian Anthropology Meeting (2006, work group "Feast and culture", coordinated by Léa Freitas Perez and Roberto Motta). Eight social sciences BA monographs and two sociology MA theses have already been produced.

<sup>18</sup> This figure is quite significant if the recent history of the center is taken into account. The Anthropology MA, a new offspring, does not have yet any defended thesis. Of those in progress, three are on anthropology of religion, two of which deal with the issue of religious feast.

movements, Islam, *umbanda*, conversion, magic, etc. A PhD thesis followed on its wake, the first in sociology of religion, dealing with the problem of conversion to Islam in Brazil and Portugal.

As we near the end, the genesis – as always – beckons us back. Religious studies research and teaching at UFMG, especially in anthropology of religion, began their systematic consolidation with Pierre Sanchis. A good deal of what is done today unfolded from what was previously highlighted, even though in different densities. To speak like him, these are the same levels, differentially articulated: urgent themes and issues of contemporary world religions, cultural and sociological traits which characterize the Brazilians' religions and their Minas Gerais variants.

From what was said on religious studies at UFMG, on its fundamental relation to Pierre Sanchis' work and on what is done today, the Maussian statement on religion in general, and its particular concreteness, could reverberate: "a particular religion is but a kind of abstraction, a conventional extract from the religious life of all its followers. Well, this religious life did not expand evenly among all individuals. Each one refracts it its own way, and various sub-groups are formed in all religion – more or less stable, more or less isolated, where the given religion is perceived from a certain point of view, and practiced in a certain way" (Mauss, 1968:99). The sacred and its admirable and infinite metamorphoses...

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(Translated by: Letícia Maria Costa da Nóbrega Cesarino)

Impressão e editoração: