CHAPTER 10

With and Beyond Plurality of Standpoints: Sociology and the *Sadhana* of Multi-Valued Logic and Living

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Introduction and Invitation

In his essay "Sociology and Ideology" André Béteille (2009) discusses a range of issues regarding the relationship between sociology and ideology, such as the need for sociology to maintain a focus on the empirical and distance itself from a zealous commitment to ideology. Towards the end of his essay, Béteille presents the challenge of pluralism, briefly pointing towards what he calls "plurality of standpoints." Béteille has consistently been a champion of a plural approach in the study of society,[1] but his discussion of plural standpoints in this essay raises further questions which call for further collaborative search and reflection. For example, what is the nature of standpoint in this plurality of standpoints—is it partial or absolute? Do these different standpoints communicate amongst themselves? Is it a responsibility for sociology to understand and contribute to communication among plural standpoints?[2] In this chapter, I wish to think together with Béteille about these questions and discuss further the challenge of pluralization that emanates from Béteille's reference to a plurality of standpoints in his essay. I do not make an exhaustive discussion of all

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the issues raised by Béteille but mainly focus on the theme of pluralism and plurality of standpoints, and discuss how ideology and theology also embody plural streams. I then briefly touch upon the issue of empirical and normative aspects of social reality that Béteille raises, and argue how sociology needs to go beyond the dualism of the empirical and normative to understand the normative strivings and struggles at work in the very heart of social reality itself.

Sociology and Plurality of Standpoints

For Béteille, an ideological approach to reality tends to present an absolutist picture, while sociology and social anthropology present us plural standpoints:

> […] there is no one unique or privileged standpoint in the study of society and culture. Even within the same society there generally is a plurality of standpoints, varying with religion, class, gender or moral and intellectual predilection, and besides different outsiders may view the same society from different standpoints. Sociology and social anthropology cannot move forward unless the plurality of standpoints is accepted as a fundamental condition for the systematic and comparative study of society and culture. But it is one thing to acknowledge the value of, say, studying marriage from the standpoint of a woman, or discrimination from that of a *dalit*, and quite another to have the standpoint itself defined by a particular agenda. (2009: 210)

Sociology and anthropology present us a plurality of standpoints of actors and institutions. But what is the nature of these standpoints? Are they partial or absolute? Building upon Béteille and also Mannheim,[3] the pioneer of sociology of knowledge, we can realize that each of these standpoints is partial, though they may claim absolutism on their own behalf.[4] But realizing the partial nature of one's standpoint and realizing that one's standpoint is interpenetrated or needs to be interpenetrated by others' standpoints calls for further work on self-transformation—transformation of one's one-dimensional epistemology and politics—mutual communication and institutional nurturance, where institutions of society facilitate such realization of one's partiality and communication via partial standpoints through institutionally facilitated spaces and processes. This calls for understanding the way in which a plurality of standpoints becomes part of the multi-dimensional processes of pluralization. This is a further

challenge for sociology. Here it is not enough to confine sociology to the empirical study of society, and not to accept the normative challenge of how sociological research can contribute to creating a field of knowledge, reflections, social relations and institutional space, where a plurality of standpoints can go beyond its initial closures—self-justification and absolutist claim—so that these standpoints can communicate with each other.

Béteille does not want one's standpoint in the study of society defined by a particular political agenda. He also does not want the study of religion to be confined only to the followers of a particular religion. As Béteille writes: "The sociologist's obligation to be even-handed and value neutral in the study of religion in a country like India where different religions with different world views and ideologies co-exist and are allowed and encouraged to grow and flourish. The comparative study of religion becomes difficult where study of religious beliefs and practices become divided among sociologists according to their religious identities so that Hinduism is studied only by Hindus, Islam only by Muslims, and Christianity only by Christians" (2009: 206). But the sad reality is that we find very few sociologists and anthropologists in India who study a religion other than the one to which they are born.[5] In order to overcome such binding and bondage as well as the problem of one's standpoint in the study of society being defined by a political agenda, as Béteille challenges us, we need to cultivate a process of pluralization where as students of society as well as the living embodiment of it we learn of the partial nature of our standpoints, accept the responsibility of going beyond these, and open ourselves to other standpoints and ways of seeing, being and living. In this way a standpoint does not remain just an "inheritance" but a project,[6] and an achievement,[7] sometimes a joint project and joint achievement, in the life of self, culture and society. Pluralizing our plural standpoints and making them open to mutual interpenetration constitutes a challenge for a creative joint project.[8]

Such a challenge creatively confronts us in contemporary ways of knowing and articulating epistemological standpoints such as feminist standpoint epistemology. In this example we are challenged to see and understand the world through "the eyes and experiences of oppressed women" and "apply vision and knowledge of oppressed women to social activism and social change" (Brooks 2006: 55). But feminist standpoint epistemology is faced with all the questions relating to standpoints raised above, including the need for going beyond one's standpoint. In this context, feminist standpoint epistemologists are themselves realizing that

there is not one standpoint for women in general and there is the need for dialogue across their different standpoints. As Brooks writes: "Many feminist scholars emphasize the need for open dialogue between women and different perspectives […]" (ibid.: 74). Sympathetic yet self-critical feminist epistemologists themselves are realizing that: "The very term 'standpoint' evokes an image of a position where one stands and views the other from a particular 'perspective.' Even though this image has been fruitful in feminist epistemology, it is time to acknowledge that it creates more problems than it solves. One problem is that it imports a fundamentalist theory of epistemic justification into feminist epistemology" (Rolin 2006: 134). In place of a fundamentalist theory of epistemic justification and what Sandra Harding, the pioneer of feminist standpoint epistemology, calls a "maximally objective standpoint," Kristen Rolin presents us with a "contextualist theory of epistemic justification" where in a particular context different standpoints including standpoints of different women interact with each other, and through this mutual interaction and dialogue justify each other. This leads to a socially grounded perspective which, it is important to note, "is not simply a view from a social position" (ibid.: 135; also see Harding 2004). "It is a matter of doing research with certain moral and social values" (ibid.). In line with our above discussions such values embody efforts to go beyond one's absolutist social positions, be open to one other and be part of the multi-dimensional processes of pluralization.

From Plurality of Standpoints to Pluralization

Pluralism is a much talked about ideal today, but we need to understand the distinction between pluralism and pluralization. A pluralist discourse can often be imprisoned within a logic of status quo without transforming the very condition such as nation-state and modernist epistemology which is prone to propound and assert a singular view of self, culture, method, disciplinarity, citizenship and the world (cf. Connolly 1995; Dallmayr 2010).[9] Most of the time we approach pluralism through the language of the noun, which is a language of stasis. Such a condition of stasis is amenable to looking at our mode of being in a condition of plurality as if we are standing still. In this context pluralization challenges us to realize plural modes of being, intersubjectivity, culture and society in dynamic ways, as verbs.[10] But as verbs they are not only activistic but also meditative. We need to transform the existing discourse and practice of pluralism into meditative verbs of pluralization.

Béteille uses the language of standpoint to point to conditions of plurality. Apart from this being a language of noun, this is also primarily the language of an observer,[11] which has its inherent limitations if it is not transformationally supplemented with the lived experiences of society actors. Participants in a condition of plurality live a life of plurality and do not only have standpoints about it. An observer's being in a condition of plurality is not the same as that of a participant. For example, participants in life-worlds of both society as well as an ideological field learn as well as fail to learn how to exist and co-exist, going beyond formal absolutist claims.

Standing is one mode of self-presentation and interaction with others, but in our spectrum of self-presentation there are other modes as well, such as sitting and walking. When we sit together and communicate and walk together it may lead to different possibilities of pluralization. While people from plural backgrounds of society, culture, gender, caste and ideology sit together it creates new realities and possibilities of going beyond their absolute claims and closures and creating spaces and processes of communication. Thus creative spaces for sitting together with and for people from different backgrounds has been one of the practices of human society—from tribal villages in the remote past as well as the present to varieties of dialogue spaces in the modern and postmodern world.[12] Similarly, when people from diverse backgrounds walk together it creates new conditions of pluralization, including co-walking meditation where they ruminate "when walking" (Thoreau 1975: 596).[13] Let us look at the significance of epochal marches such as Gandhi's Salt March in 1930 and the walk across riot-hit Noakali in 1947 which contributed to calming down communal fire and bring about peace,[14] Martin Luther King Jr's famous Washington March for Freedom in 1963 and marches organized by the women's movements. On the march in Washington walkers realized that they were not only blacks and whites, as Martin Luther King addressed these walkers of "creative suffering": "We cannot walk alone." In his epochal "I have a dream" speech King also hoped for a day when people "will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Similarly, when a man takes part in the marches organized by the women's movements it creates a moving condition to realize that one is not just a man. In these marches participants get an opportunity to realize that they do not have just one standpoint; their standpoint is not an inheritance but a project, a joint project. In order to realize pluralization we need to go beyond the existential fact of the plurality of stand-

points and explore how in the fabric of daily life and in struggles for co-realization, such as varieties of struggles and mobilizations for dignity and dialogues, participants go beyond the existing logic of closure and pluralize their lives and modes of relationships.

Pluralization and the *Sadhana* of Multi-Valued Logic and Living

Sociology for Béteille presents a plurality of standpoints. But our realization and living of plurality with a predominant focus on standpoint is different from a mode which emphasizes and practices sitting together and walking together. Furthermore, all these standpoints belong to a field, and from the perspective of the field each of these standpoints is partly true and also not partly true. Moreover, each of these standpoints is interpenetrated by the standpoint of others. For example, a Dalit standpoint on society is interpenetrated by a Brahminical standpoint in the ontology of reality as a field which holds both the Dalits and Brahmins together, even though both of them may deny that their standpoint is interpenetrated by the other. Similar is the situation vis-à-vis the standpoint of man and woman in society. While this is an aspect of reality which holds us, our epistemological construction of it is, on many occasions, one-dimensional, this being fuelled by an uncritical bondage to a single political ideology. In this context, how do we go beyond a one-dimensional epistemological construction of reality where the ontology of reality is inherently plural? How do we pluralize our plural standpoints, which at the level of self, ideology and even sociological method present themselves in a singular, absolutist and exclusionary way? Pluralizing plural standpoints calls for generosity and expansion of points of view into circles of views,[15] on the part of both participants and observers, which is not necessarily articulated and embodied in the sociological method that is prevalent today. This calls for *sadhana*,[16] striving, of multi-valued logic and living as well as a spiritual transformation of our consciousness, method, self and society, these being prone to clinging to the absolutism of a singular standpoint. *Sadhana* makes our knowledge, including our locational knowledge of standpoint, not just received and taken for granted but evolving, interpenetrative and emergent.

Multi-valued logic, as recently presented to us by J.N. Mohanty building upon multiple traditions of humanity, such as the Jaina tradition of *Anekantavada* (many paths to truth), Husserlian phenomenology of overlapping contents and Gandhian pathways of non-violence, emphasizes that

"every point of view is partly true, partly false and partly undecidable" (Mohanty 2000: 24).[17] This is different from a dualistic logic where each point of view claims absolutism for itself, or its absolutist claim is accepted at face value by the observer as well as the participant. One might claim absolutism for oneself but the fields of life, history and society compel us to realize the partial nature of our absolutist claims. This is also the calling of life. In life there is an inescapable pluralization, which calls for the cultivation of a multi-valued logic and living where we move beyond our initial standpoints and interact with each other, sometimes even going inside each other. Such a multi-valued logic and living embodies an art of autonomy and interpenetration where our autonomy is not fixed but transforms itself in the process of mutual interaction and communication.

One important aspect of multi-valued logic is overcoming what Sri Aurobindo calls the "egoistic standpoint" of subject positions or position of actors (Sri Aurobindo 1962: 258).[18] In sociology we mainly conceptualize, perceive and relate to actors as holders of social roles and social identities. But an actor as an occupant of social role and positional-cum-social identity such as a wife or a Dalit can enact a positional standpoint as an ego or a self. While one's egoistic standpoint can be more closed, one's standpoint as a self can be much more open. Transformational streams in psychology, sociology, philosophy and spiritual traditions urge us to realize the distinction between ego and self. Therefore, overcoming our standpoint as that of an ego and cultivating the standpoint of self in our enactment of positions and embodiment of transpositionality helps us to move beyond our own initial standpoints and be open to and embrace the standpoints of others. This contributes to the pluralization of our subject positions, first of all by realizing the subject position of self in place of the subject position of ego, overcoming positional fixation and realizing transpositionality and a multi-valued logic and living.

Multi-valued logic and living is an aspect of reality which needs to be understood and explored and not asserted. Here I am not making an a priori assertion about it but just pointing to the need for investigating multi-valued aspects of reality as an indispensable empirical task for sociology. At the same time, by investigating it empirically sociology can contribute to public enlightenment regarding the nature of its existence or lack of it, and in the process contribute to the normative task of contributing to building a self and society of pluralization. But this challenges sociology to understand some of its own limitations; for example, its uncritical bondage to a logic of dualism. In a dualistic sociology, the plurality of

standpoints is likely to be understood dualistically, and even left at that by the empirically minded sociologist. Despite ideological construction and the valorization of our absolutist standpoints, communications take place or fail, but in order to understand the lack of or failure of communication we also need a multi-valued sociology that pursues a multi-valued logic. Thus multi-valued logic and living challenges both sociology and ideology to pluralize; it challenges sociology to understand its own limitations, such as bondage to dualism, and to cultivate non-dual modes of investigation and cultivation of knowledge, self and society.

The *sadhana* of multi-valued logic and living challenges us to pluralize both sociology and ideology. For Béteille (2002), sociology is a modernistic project that is different from a project of tradition or postmodernism. This way, sociology becomes a part of the post-traditional telos of modernity.[19] But modernity is not only a condition of life; as the difficult journey of the modern world reveals and different critiques of it, such as those offered by Foucault and the postmodernists, have shown, modernity itself has an element of ideology. Following Béteille's own plea to maintain a distance between ideology and sociology, should not sociology maintain and self-consciously cultivate a distance from the ideology of modernity? If sociology is a study of our world, this world consists of plural modes and organizations of life—traditional, modern and postmodern. If sociology only follows the post-traditional teleology of modernity how can it study varieties of forms of life—traditional and modern as well as postmodern? These varieties of forms of life exist not only in the so-called traditional societies such as India or Lapland but in all contemporary societies—whether India, Indonesia, Sweden, France, Britain, Germany, Singapore, China or the USA. If sociology is only bound to an ideology of post-traditional telos of modernity, is it capable of even empirically understanding the plural worlds it claims to understand?

Plural Streams in Ideology and Theology and Challenges for Sociology

Pluralization is also a challenge for ideology. As already suggested, in the condition of ideological plurality there is a dimension of pluralization at work. During the Cold War, protagonists of communism and capitalism learnt how to live with each other in the world system. This was in the midst of violence, war and a propensity for mutual annihilation. This was not an easy co-existence, but for both sides there was no alternative.

Each side also influenced the other—socialism influencing welfare policies in capitalistic societies and market principles influencing the socialistic organization of the economy, leading to the principle and practices of market socialism. Therefore there was communication across the ideological divide, and despite and in the midst of difficulties, both sides learnt how to live together. This is an aspect of all ideological situations. For example, the way in which followers of different political parties with their different ideologies live in a social space, be it village or nation, point to an indispensable aspect of co-survival which is difficult and fragile. But to understand the ideological field as a practical field of life we need to move beyond a representational and typifying view of ideology and adopt a communicational view, especially a perspective that takes into account the pragmatics of communication. If we look at the work of ideologies from the point of view of pragmatics of communication we realize that ideologies are much more plural in their lived realities and histories. Béteille himself has shown us this in his discussion of plural streams within Marxism. This work of plural streams from the point of view of intellectual history, which is true of not only Marxism but also many other ideologies, can be linked to a pragmatics of communication which challenges us to realize plural streams in existing ideological practices and communication among them.

Plural streams in the discourse and practice of ideology also challenges us to understand plural streams in the theological and the theologian. Béteille writes: "The distinction between the normative and the empirical approaches is seen most clearly in the contrast between the theological and sociological approaches to the study of religion. The theologian is concerned primarily with questions of truth and efficacy of religious beliefs and practices. Such questions do not concern the sociologist in the same way. His primary aim is to observe, describe, interpret and explain the ways in which religious beliefs and practices actually operate" (2009: 204). But in the actual work of many theologians today there is a greater embodiment of an empirical approach to the study of religion, deploying social science methods such as participant observation, historical study and survey work. The work done by faculty and students at the Department of Christianity, University of Madras, led by the pre-eminent social theorist, philosopher and theologian Felix Wilfred, uses social science methods in the study of religions. The department is not confined only to the study of Christian religions: students and faculty who are Christians also study the religious practices of other religions employing the methods of social

sciences. As Felix Wilfred writes in his essay, "Christian Studies: The Contours of a Discipline and Its Future Prospects" in the Silver Jubilee Volume of the Department *Transforming Religion: Prospects for a New Society*: "In the Department of Christian Studies of the University of Madras, there have been several dissertations written through empirical investigations applying qualitative and quantitative methods of study" (2009: 244). As Béteille draws the distinction between sociology and theology, Wilfred draws the distinction between theology and Christian Studies:

> A good theology serves an important purpose of motivating and inspiring the believing Christian community by elucidating the meanings of the truths of faith and drawing its practical implications. But the discipline of theology has its serious limitations when done from within its religious precincts. […] Christian Studies does not necessarily call for confessional approach, nor does it exclude it. Therefore, those who believe explicitly in Christianity and those who are not Christians but are interested in knowing what Christianity is all about, could find that knowledge and continue their search. *This open-endedness is necessary to allow people of other faiths to find a point of intellectual intersection with Christianity. This could be different from what traditional theology projects.* (ibid.: 245; emphases added)

For Wilfred, Christian Studies (ibid.: 244) does not continue the project of an absolutist claim about one's religion:

> […] all religions fall into the temptation of claiming the particular belief system it represents as something universally valid. Christian Studies does not aim at such universalizing of the particular, which is a centripetal movement. Christian Studies needs to understand itself as part of a centrifugal movement. It tries to find the universal lying outside its boundaries and relates the particularity it embodies with this universality in a process of dialogue and inquiry.

Social science methods, including sociology and anthropology methods, become a partner in this process of moving outside one's boundary. At the same time, Christian Studies does not just give an objective picture of the subject of study because it does not pre-suppose that one can study religion or, for that matter, any aspect of reality without the involvement of the subject. But this involvement is not an extension of one's faith but a working out of one's role as a student of faith, religion and society. In the words of Wilfred:

> *Comparative religion, like its kindred discipline of phenomenology of religion, is non-judgmental about religion, and therefore it claims to give an "objective" picture of religion. Christian studies, on the other hand, presuppose that in the process of knowledge the subject is deeply involved. Many studies in sociology of religion have underlined that one does not understand a religion and its expressions unless one enters a certain way into the world of its believers.* Christian Studies does not pretend to give a neutral picture of Christianity, but goes into the world of faith of Christians as they would like to be understood. *This epistemological approach to Christianity—for that matter in the study of religion—does not necessarily presuppose faith in the student and researcher of this discipline.* (ibid.: 246; emphases added)

Some of the themes in Wilfred's narration here speak to themes in Béteille's discussion. For example, while presenting Srinivas's work as an epitome of the sociological approach to Hindu religion as different from a theological approach, Béteille nonetheless tells us how Srinivas did not like representations of his religion which he perceived to be misrepresentation: "He once returned from a seminar, infuriated by a participant who had described Hindu beliefs and practices as 'mumbo-jumbo'." (Béteille 2009: 205). Béteille reads Srinivas's reaction in this way: "It is no easy matter to remain detached, objective and value-neutral in the study of religion, and particularly of one's religion" (ibid.). But in showing his reaction, was Srinivas becoming less value neutral or was he expressing his genuine requirement that the religion that he was born with and that sustained his faith should be understood properly and, least of all, not misrepresented? This possible wish is a universal wish for all of us, wherever we come from: we want to be understood properly and with care and respect in terms of representation of our locational identities. In this way Wilfred's charting of a pathway for Christian Studies, as an effort to "go into the faith of Christians as they would like to be understood,"[20] resonates with Srinivas's possible wish that his religion should be properly understood. This does not mean, however, an uncritical glorification or "wholesale condemnation" (Béteille 2009: 205). But to understand one's own religion or that of others is not to impose one's a priori faith or belief upon one's study. This is the approach of sociology as well as that of Christian Studies, which does not necessarily presuppose "faith in the student and researcher of this discipline" (Wilfred 2009: 246).

In the University of Madras the Department of Christian Studies is part of the School of Philosophy and Religious Thought. There are also other departments, such as Islamic Studies, Vaishnavism, Buddhist Studies, Jaina

Studies and Saiva Siddhanta. At Oxford there are both the Oxford Centres of Hindu Studies and the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, which are not however part of the University of Oxford. But I do not know if proponents of other religious studies departments within the University of Madras as well as the Oxford Centres of Hinduism and Islamic Studies have the same open-ended approach that Wilfred holds and make it clear not to impose their a priori religious beliefs about the study of their religion on others.

Though, similar to Béteille's distinction of sociology and theology, Wilfred makes the distinction between Christian Studies and theology (Wilfred's Christian Studies comes closer to Béteille's sociological approach), he, at the same time, as in the above-cited paragraph, challenges us to realize that in order to understand the religious life of a people we have to go inside it: it is not enough to stand outside as an observer. This challenges Béteille's approach to the sociology of religion, which prefers to stand outside and not enter into the religious belief of the believers.[21] Without entering the religious life of the believer, which is different from acting out one's faith or uncritically borrowing another's faith, how can the sociology of religion fulfill its task? This in turn calls for a simultaneous cultivation of the subjective and objective in one's study of religion and society.

Wilfred creates a distance from the theological approach to religion, starting with his own journey, at least formally, as a student and teacher of theology (see Gnanapragasam and Schussler Fiorenza 2008). This journey itself points to critical and self-transforming plural streams in the theological, which is much more than what is typified in the noun theology in both Béteille and Wilfred. What we find in Wilfred is a continuation of a rich legacy within theological engagement with religion, society and the world. Let us consider here the seminal work of Paul Tillich. Tillich was a theologian, but as a theologian he talked about the need for skeptical belief in matters of not only study of religion but in one's faith.[22] Such an articulation of faith—faith with skepticism and vulnerability—now finds a creative resonance from the other side of intellectual spectrum, for example from the shores of critical theory and post-metaphysical thought, where sociologists and philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas (2003, 2008) are challenging us to understand the limits of rational knowledge and rework our relationship between faith and knowledge. Habermas (2006: 5) pleads for a "complementary learning process" in which both people of faith and reason take part. In this learning process "true belief is not only a doctrine,

believed content, but a source of energy that the person who has a faith taps performatively and thus nurtures his or her entire life" (ibid.: 9). Habermas also urges us to realize that what is needed at this contemporary juncture is a "correlation of reason and faith, of reason and religion, both being summoned to mutual cleansing and healing."[23]

In the theological legacy we also find the inspiring work of Raimundo Panikkar (1977), who embodied deep and meditative pluralization. He studied the Vedas starting during his initial journey as a Catholic priest and his *The Vedic Experience Mantramanjari: An Anthropology of the Vedas for Modern Man and Contemporary Celebration* is a testament to the deep quest for the other from within theology. In our representation of theology in sociology we are invited to acknowledge these plural streams and cultivate them further (cf. Wilfred 2008; Vinayaraj 2010).[24] In these plural streams of theology there is a great deal of appreciation for sociological strivings as David Smith, an insightful contemporary theologian, writes: "Indeed, there are times when the work of contemporary sociologists is characterized by such depth and seriousness that one is inclined to think that they are the true inheritors of the ancient prophetic traditions working in the world today" (2007: 83). Similarly from the sociological side there is an openness to the theological. As Robert Bellah, the great sociologist of religion of our times, tells us: "Some of the systems theorists such as Parsons and Karl Deutsch have conceived of human action as multi-layered and open. Deutch, for example, has spoken of the propensity for all highly complex systems to break down, and has borrowed the theological term 'grace' to designate the indispensable but unpredictable situational conditions that seem to be necessary in order for any complex system to function at all" (1970: 241; also see Bellah 2011).[25] And John Clammer, himself a sociologist and anthropologist, urges us to understand the significance of theology in giving us a sense of whole and the need to pursue it in our complex world.[26]

Beyond the Dualism of the Empirical and Normative

This brings us finally to the difficult issue of the normative and the empirical. For Béteille, sociology has to study the empirical, but the empirical itself has many layers of reality and realizations. To study the empirical, sociology has to be much more than empirical and also go beyond empiricism as a singular method.[27] Moreover, the normative also has multiple meanings and modes of realizations. Normative does not just mean what is coded as norms and

expected and uttered by the formulaic interpreters and defenders of social norms. Normative also refers to aspirations, strivings and struggles to make life and society more beautiful, dignified and dialogical. Such a quest for the normative is not just an extension of existing norms in society, as most of these norms in traditional, modern and postmodern worlds are islands of problematic justice, dialogue and beauty. Normative refers to a dimension of *sadhana*, striving and struggle in our very existent world, and it is in that way a part of reality itself. It is a fragile, ambiguous and uncertain quest as the very project of life, reality and society, which nonetheless challenges us to understand and cultivate this normative quest for beauty, dignity, dialogue and pluralization in the midst of ugliness, violence and monological absolutism of various kinds. Should not sociology try to understand this quest of the normative and cultivate it further in self, culture, knowledge and society?

Notes

1. As, for example, in his M.N. Roy memorial lecture on "Marxism, Pluralism and Orthodoxy" presented near three decades ago Béteille (1982) argued how Marxism is not a singular and monolithic ideological system and consists of plural streams of reflections and practices.
2. It must be noted here that cultivating plurality of standpoints and facilitating communication among them is also part of the dialogue philosophies and works of our times. There is a long genealogy of multiplicity of standpoints in philosophy and other fields as exemplified, for example, in the works of Martin Buber (1958). There is also attention to plurality of standpoints beyond absolutism in the work of Karl Mannheim (1936), the pioneer of sociology of knowledge. John Clammer also here draws our attention to the work of John Paul Lederach in peace studies and Marjorie Green in philosophy (personal communication).
3. In his *Ideology and Utopia* Mannheim (1936: 75–76) writes:

> It may be true that every form of expression, in which we clothe our thoughts, tends to impose upon them an absolute tone. In our epoch, however, it is precisely the function of historical investigation […] to analyse the elements that make up our self-assurance, so indispensable for action in immediate, concrete situations, and to counteract the bias which might arise from what we, as individuals, take for granted. This is possible only through incessant care and determination to reduce to a minimum the tendency to self-apotheosis. Through this effort the one-sidedness of our point of view is counteracted, and conflicting intellectual positions may actually come to supplement one another. (ibid.: 75–76)

4. Here Marcus Bussey insightfully comments: "Phenomenologically they are experienced as absolute until some event shatters the illusion—transformation requires such a disjuncture so that identity can shift to incorporate multiplicity" (personal communication).
5. This is also true of M.N. Srinivas, whose sociological approach to religion Béteille celebrates. Srinivas did not study any other religion except Hinduism. Even his essay, "The Social Significance of Religion in India," does not discuss much the work and dynamics of non-Hindu religions in India (cf. Srinivas 2009; Giri 2010).
6. I draw this distinction from Nitasha Kaul's (2009) very illuminating discussion on the need for new kind of knowledge creation, which seeks to put different parts, especially forgotten and excluded parts, together. For Kaul, "[…] modernist knowledge needs to be haunted by a post-colonial memory, a re-membering, which can be instigated by placing the question of difference at the heart of the story. When one re-members, one does not simply recall—to re-member is to put it altogether again". As an example, the standpoint of knowledge participation and generation is a project, "not an inheritance".
7. In her reflections on standpoint theory in epistemology, for example feminist standpoint epistemology, Ahlstrom Kristoffer (2005: 88) tell us: "As standpoint theorists often emphasize (Harding included), a standpoint is an achievement. Women do not automatically accept a feminist standpoint just by virtue of being women, a standpoint has to be achieved, and the way to achieve it is to raise one's consciousness."
8. In this context, Shiv Visvanathan's description of the main character Jagannatha in the novel *Bharatipura* by U.R. Ananthamurthy shows us how one can embrace and grow into plural standpoints. What Visvanathan (2011: 70) writes deserves our careful consideration:

   > I think the genius of the book lies in the flat land called Jagannatha. He is a middling character […] Yet Jagannatha is a seed that grows in power because of the humus of characters around him. In every chapter, he almost absorbs another point of view. His self grows as he discovers the richness of the other he wants to change.

9. As Connolly writes: "A conventional pluralist celebrates diversity within settled contexts of conflict and collective action […] But what about the larger contexts within which the pattern of diversity is set? How plural or monistic are they? To what extent does a cultural presumption of normal individual or the preexisting subject precede and confine conventional pluralism?" (Connolly 1995: xiii).

10. As Mannheim (1936: 20) writes: "The world of external objects and psychic experience appears to be in a continuous flux. Verbs are more adequate symbols for this situation than nouns." What Connolly (1995: xxi) writes here provides us pathways of pluralism as multi-dimensional verbs:

    A pluralizing culture embodies a *micropolitics* of action by the self on itself and the small-scale assemblage upon itself, a *politics of disturbance* through which sedimented identities and moralities are rendered more alert to the deleterious effects of their naturalization upon difference, *a politics of enactment* through which new possibilities of being are propelled into established constellations, *a politics of representational assemblages* through which general policies are processed through the state, a *politics of interstate relations*, and a *politics of nonstatist, cross-national movements* through which external/internal pressure is placed on corporate and state-centered priorities.

11. We can note here the title of Béteille's (1998) essay "Comparative Method and the Standpoint of the Investigator." Béteille is a proponent of the comparative method, but this also raises the question whether comparative method from the standpoint of an observer would be same as one from the experiential perspective of participants.

    In a related note, Amartya Sen also seems to look at the human condition from the point of view of the observer, which is different from that of a participant. Sen, whose ideas have been presented above, talks about positional objectivity, but this objectivity is that of an observer: "[…] positionally dependent observations, beliefs, and actions are central to our knowledge and practical reason. The nature of objectivity in epistemology, decision theory and ethics has to take note of the parametric dependence of observation and observation on the position of the observer" (1994: 126). But here again there is the need of pluralization of the model and working of agents not only as observers but also participants. Sen talks about the need for positional objectivity, but once the agents are not only observers but also participants the objectivity that emerges is not only objective but also intersubjective and transsubjective. So we need to explore *transpositional subject-objectivity*—one which emerges out of pluralization of the subjects, border-crossing transmutations among positions and transformative cultivation of the objective and the subjective, including intersubjective and transsubjective.

12. We can look at the significance of the public sphere in both the modern as well as the pre-modern world, in terms of varieties of spaces of meeting

as well as working together to seek to bring people from different backgrounds together amidst continued challenges of exclusions. In terms of the possibilities that sitting together offers, my student Rajakishore Mahana in his work on tribal movements in Orissa shares an insightful lesson from his fieldwork. In his fieldwork, Harabati, one woman tribal leader from Raigarh Orissa told him that when there was intractable conflict between the visiting police and tribals of the village she asked all of them, police and the tribals, to sit down, and it helped to calm the situation.

13. We have many moving meditations on the significance of walking in human life and for our expanding self and world-realizations. For anthropologist Tim Ingold, "[…] walking is not the behavioral output of a mind encased within a pedestrian body. It is rather, in itself, a way of thinking and knowing—'an activity that takes place through the heart and mind as much as through the feet'" (Ingold 2011: S135). In his study of political processions in Tamil Nadu which is modeled on religious processions, Bernard Bates (2011) uses the term "walking utopia," which while creating the condition of fellowship among participants does not necessarily enable them to go beyond their initial religious and political standpoints. But we see this in other modes of walking, such as in the Warkari movement in Maharastra, which has a cross-caste dimension. As Dallmyr writes: "[…] periodic pilgrimages to Pandarpur are central to the Warkaris' life, but not in the same way as pilgrimage to other holy places such as Banaras or Dwarka. In the general Hindu tradition, the focus is typically on the destination of the pilgrimage, the sacred center of worship. But in the case of the Warkaris, the accent is not so much on the destination as on the journey itself" (Dallmayr 2007: 56). What Dallmayr suggests is that in the journey there is an openness to others which is different from one's location at home. This openness emerges in other occasions of journey and encounters as well. In the same book, where Dallmayr writes about the Warkari movement, he also presents us the following experience of a woman that he talked to after a train journey and the encounter that happened:

> […] I talked to another Indian woman, the wife of a senior professor of English at the University of Baroda. She told me the story of a strange happening—an event that startled her and left her wondering and amazed: She was traveling with her son by train from Delhi to Shillong, a journey of some twenty hours. In her compartment was a young man, a soldier in the Indian army. Given the long train ride, a conversation developed between them, starting at first haltingly and almost absentmindedly and then turning more serious. The woman had been raised in the Vaishnava tradition and had never devoted much thought to Muslim beliefs and

practices. During the conversation, it emerged that the young man was a Muslim—deeply religious and knowledgeable Muslim. Prodded by her questions, the young man began to talk about the Islamic faith, the long history of Islam, and the deeper meaning of Quranic passages. It was as if he illuminated from within a building that had always seemed to her dark and uninviting. As she confessed to me, she was profoundly moved by this sincere (and nonproselytizing) disclosure of faith, and something happened to her on that train ride that she had not planned or anticipated. Somehow—and she was not quite sure how—the encounter had transformed her, and opened her heart to new possibilities and a new dimension of human relations. (Dallmayr 2007: 257–258)

In his autobiography, *A Living Faith: My Quest for Peace, Harmony and Social Change*, Ashgar Ali Engineer also narrates a similar insight emerging during a meeting in walking:

Here, I would like to narrate an interesting encounter with a postman when I was in the 8th standard. In hindsight, I feel the postman was a very humble person but with a good understanding of religion. I was, on the contrary, very orthodox with the conviction that Islam was the only true religion. One day, the postman met me on the road and began to talk to me. He said in a very philosophical way that all paths, though they differ from each other, lead to God and that all paths are true. I protested and said that that could never be. For example, idol worship can never be a true path and it can never lead one to God. Islam believes only in one God and everything contrary to it is false. I remember the postman smiling at me and saying that if one has *shraddha* (faith) in idols that can also lead to God. I, however, stuck to my point and the postman left it at that. But whenever he met me, he smiled in a charming way.

I also used to read Sufi poetry, especially of the noted Sufi poet Mir Dard. His beliefs were of the kind that affirmed the truth of what the postman used to tell me. I could not quite fathom the stand he took […] This would leave me quite perplexed. (Engineer 2011: 11–12)

The above two narrations show how, in complex ways, walking does add an element of pluralization to our ontology and epistemology of standpoint. But to this condition of pluralization of walking and sitting on a train, we can also invite the experience of "sitting on a boat." It reminds us of the symbol of Noah's boat described in the Bible and also of the way in which Jesus and his followers sat on the boat and crossed over to the other side of the sea to meet people there who were considered other.

Since our present discussion involves the border-crossing dialogue between sociology and theology, what theologian Vinayraj writes about the significance of sitting on a boat deservers our careful attention:

> Sea, for Jews is a symbol of chaos. The land across this sea is pictured as a terrific land as we used to tell in the fairy tales. It is the abode of evils […] It is a place of violence and terror. In our society we use these imageries to talk about Dalit/Tribal colonies! By exhorting the disciples to "go across to the other side," Jesus asks them to deconstruct their subjectivity conceptions and move beyond to an existence of fraternity. Jesus shows his interest to talk to them by "sitting in the boat." The "boat" symbolizes the reconciliation between "shores." […] Here "crossing" means "bridging" and that is why it was a stormy journey for them. It was a symbolic journey from "hostility" to "hospitality". (Vinayaraj 2010: 50)

To the above experience we can add the recent effort of Freedom Flotilla, where activists protesting at Israel's blockade of Gaza were on a ship that was crossing over to Gaza. But the ship was brutally attacked by Israel and many activists from Turkey were killed.

14. During his walk in Noakhali to bring about peace among Hindus and Muslims, Gandhi said that the greatness of a person lies not only in the one or two spectacular things that one does in one's life but how much "dust" one collects on one's feet.
15. Management thinker and poet Subhash Sharma calls it omega circle, and is doing work on creating dialogues across this circle. See Sharma (2008).
16. For Marcus Bussey, "*Sadhana* as a quest, striving, struggle involves *tapasya*—a sacrificing of one's veil of certainty—and opening to dialogue via vulnerability and inner reflection" (personal communication).
17. What Mohanty (2000: 24; emphases added) writes helps us to understand the proposed multi-valued logic of autonomy and interpenetration:

> The ethic of non-injury applied to philosophical thinking requires that one does not reject outright the other point of view without first recognizing the element of truth in it; it is based on the belief that every point of view is partly true, partly false, and partly undecidable. A simple two-valued logic requiring that a proposition must either be true or false is thereby rejected, and what the Jaina philosopher proposes is a multi-valued logic. To this multi-valued logic, I add the Husserlian idea of overlapping contents. The different perspectives on a thing are not mutually exclusive, but share some contents with each other. The different 'worlds' have shared contents, contrary to the total relativism. *If you represent them by circles,*

they are intersecting circles, not incommensurable, [and it is this model of] intersecting circles which can get us out of relativism on the one hand and absolutism on the other.

This multi-valued logic also resonates with what J.P.S. Uberoi (2002), building on Goethe, Gandhi and the Hermetic tradition of Europe, calls "the four-fold logic of truth and method." In the paragraph above, Mohanty refers to the Jaina tradition of *Anekantavada*, about which what BP Singh writes deserves our careful attention:

Anekantavada wad directly related to Mahavira's philosophy of non-violence. We have to recognize that ordinarily violence is rooted in dogmatic and mistaken knowledge claim that fail to recognize other legitimate perspectives. *Anekantavada* provides us with an alternative epistemology to support dialogue among people of diverse viewpoints. It does not mean conceding that all views are valid. It does, suggest, however, that logic and evidence determine the validity of a given view. *Anekantavada* allows us to accept a pluralistic approach to reality. (Singh 2008: 96–97)

K.S. Singh, the heart-touching anthropologist and seeker of pluralism, also writes the following about *Anekantavada*, which is insightful:

It should be noted that while diversity of perceptions, approaches, and practices are recognized by some schools including those of the idealist philosophy, it is Anekantavada described by S. Radhakrishnan as a doctrine of realistic pluralism that tries to explore diversity logically and in depth.

[…] there are three tenets of Anekantavada. One, that there is a possibility of many perceptions of an object; two that everything is relative and multi-dimensional; and three, that there is an in-built co-existence of opposites, that one dimension is possible as another and it is only in relation to other factors like time, place, and context that one dimension gains predominance over another. All this is subsumed under the doctrine of *syadavada* or *saptabhangi*. From the acceptance of the multi-dimensional nature of objects and their probability is derived the moral imperative of *ahimsa* or non-violence. (2011)

18. In this context, what philosopher Ashok Gangadean tells us deserves our careful attention: "Spirituality is a philosophical point of view concerning the rational awakening that enables you to break free of your ego perspective, your closed view, the egocentric point of view, and become, instead

dialogical, open to multiple views. And it helps you to negotiate them. You become a more mature, awakened rational being" (Gangadean et al. 2000: 287). Mrinal Miri also talks about the need to overcome "egocentricity," which "distorts, to a greater or less extent, most of our perceptions of reality, and this is especially true of our perception of human reality" (2003: 42). Egocentricity also distorts our efforts to know another person; thus the need to overcome it. But for Miri,

> […] the overcoming of ego in attending to another person is never an isolated phenomenon; to be able to transcend one's ego is also to be able to achieve true humility; and with humility comes the realization of the infinite difficulty of being just to another person, the realization, in other words, of the ever-present possibility that one has blotted out, from one's attention, vital, if subtle aspects of the other person's behaviour. A natural accompaniment of such a realization on the way to achieving the true emotion of love, or what Gandhi might have meant by *ahimsa*. And it is the possibility of ahimsa in this sense that makes knowledge of the other as a person possible. (ibid.: 43)

Thus overcoming egocentricity helps one realize humility and *ahimsa* in one's knowledge of and relationship with the other, which also contributes to overcoming one's one-sided standpoint. In a related move, philosopher Peter Singer, who has also urged us to go beyond the anthropocentric standpoint and realize the suffering and pain of non-human beings, challenges us to cultivate "the point of view of the universe," "thereby transcending not only our individual point of view but the point of view of our society and species. Of course, Singer doesn't believe that the universe has a point of view, but he thinks that this is an apt metaphor for the human capacity to take up a standpoint of impartial and equal concern for the welfare of all sentient beings" (Nagel 2010: 26).

19. This is also the approach of Giddens and Beck (Beck et al. 1994).
20. In this context, what the Dalai Lama (2011: 19), writes is an inspiring example of how to understand religion other than one's own:

> For some people, then, the concept of a Creator, God, is very helpful. I once asked an old Christian monk why Christianity does not believe in previous lives. He said, 'Because this very life is created by God. Thinking that gives a feeling of intimacy with God. This body comes from our mother's womb and so we have a feeling of closeness and comfort with our mother. So. the same is the case with God. The closer one feels, the stronger the intention to follow God's advice, which is love, compassion.'

Therefore, the theistic approach is very powerful and much more helpful for many people than a non-theistic approach.

It must be noted here that many streams in Buddhism do not have a theistic approach, and the Dalai Lama is able to understand and appreciate the need for the theistic approach in Christianity. He also does not want anybody to convert from one religion to another, for example from Christianity to Buddhism. What he writes below is also an example of how one can go beyond oneself in understanding the religion of another person:

It is better to keep one's own religious tradition […] The best is to have information. This helps to develop respect. Therefore, keep your Christian tradition, if you are a Christian, but gain understanding and knowledge of other traditions. As for methods, all teach the same practice—love, compassion, tolerance. Since the practice is shared in common, it is alright to adopt some methods from Buddhism. But as for the Buddhist concept of no absolute—this is strictly Buddhist business. It is not helpful for others to learn. One Christian father asked me about emptiness, voidness, and I told him that this is not good for him. If I teach complete interdependence, this might harm his strong faith in God. So it is better for such people not to listen to talk about voidness. (ibid.)

While the above passage shows the remarkable generosity of the Dalai Lama, it leaves us with further questions. Are concepts from a religious tradition, such as emptiness from Buddhism, meant to be limited to the believers and practitioners of these traditions? Are they not universal? Even if they unsettle believers in other traditions, is there a responsibility to share and learn on the part of people in interaction. In interreligious interaction is there not a necessity to go beyond one's tradition and explore paths of seeking in emergent ways? Is it not possible to realize God even in Christian tradition not only as fullness but emptiness? The Dalai Lama and proponents of such view may note what Felix Wilfred and Bede Griffiths write below. For Wilfred (1999: xiii),

The Christian attempts to cross over to the other, to the different, has been made by and large from the pole of being or fullness. This naturally creates problems, which can be overcome by activating also to cross over from the pole of nothingness or emptiness. The central Christian mystery of Jesus Christ offers the revelation of both fullness and nothingness—the total self-emptying. Many frontiers which are found difficult to negotiate and cross over could be crossed by making use of the other pole represented in the Christian mystery of emptiness as self-abnegation, so as to reach a deeper perception of the mystery of God, the world and the self.

Perhaps here lies something that could become an important program for Christianity and its theology at the turn of the millennium.

For Griffiths, "[…] We often find that the Christian concept of God becomes personal that it needs to be corrected by the impersonalism of Buddhism" (Griffiths 1976: 86).

21. Borrowing the language of Weber, Béteille (2002) pre-sets his approach to religion as that of the "religiously unmusical".
22. Tillich (1957: 20) writes in his *Dynamics of Faith*:

The doubt which is implicit in every act of faith is neither the methodological and skeptical doubt. It is the doubt which accompanies every risk. It is not the permanent doubt of the scientist, and it is not transitory doubt of the skeptic, but it is the doubt of him who is ultimately concerned about a concrete context. One would call it the existential doubt, in contrast to the methodological and skeptical doubt. It does not question whether a special proposition is true or false. It does not reject every concrete truth, but it is aware of the element of insecurity in every existential truth. At the same time, the doubt which is implied in faith accepts this insecurity and takes into itself in an act of courage. Faith includes courage.

Tillich speaks about doubt in the act of faith which finds a resonance in Iqbal's approach to Islam. According to Ayesha Jalal, "[…] Iqbal asserted that the principle of doubt was the beginning of all knowledge. And the opening word in the Muslim creed, *la*—literally 'there is no God'—was a statement of that doubt. Without the power of negation in the *la*, the affirmation of God in *illaha ilallah* loses its true in meaning" (Jalal 2009: 461).

Tillich is a source of inspiration to critical practitioners of faith in Islam, such as Amina Wadud, who has fought against the religion's patriarchal structures. In her words:

I have fought the gender *jihad* to remove the blinkers that see only the illusion of fragmentation and then build structures and formulate systems to sustain the perception that it is real, and then to give divine sanction to the illusion of human independence from transcendent peace and unity […] The significance of Tillich's work was simply that it expressed itself in response to the moral-spiritual dilemma of modern consciousness. I ran up against a scarcity of information in response to such dilemmas from modern Muslim thinkers. They were obsessed with *realitic politique* (every-

thing was power, authority, and control) through the medium of legal operation. (Wadud 2006: 258–259)

This also shows how critical theological work transcends religious boundaries, as a woman in Islam who is struggling for gender justice is drawing inspiration from a Christian theologian.

23. Habermas shared this in his now famous dialogue with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (who became Pope Benedict XVI) held on January 19, 2004 at the Catholic Academy in Munich, in which both agreed that: "Religions and secular rationalities need to engage in a mutual process of dialogue in order to learn from each other and to protect the planet from the destructive potential of the uncoupling of faith and reason" (Bellah 2008; Habermas and Ratzinger 2007; Eder 2007).

    Apart from this celebrated dialogue with the pope, Habermas had a long dialogue with the great theologian Johannes B. Metz from Germany that is relevant here. Metz has a critical-practical approach to theology as he writes: "It is surely true that the frontiers of modern theology runs across confessional boundaries. In this case, how could theology itself determine the distinctive unity of what it is concerned with? The quest, its dwelling place is not pure theology but […] faith in practice" (1970: 82).

    In his dialogue with Habermas, Metz had argued that reason cannot just continue the tradition of critical thought from Athens, that is from Greek tradition, it also must be open to the other tradition of reason what Metz calls "anamenestic reason," a reason which remembers the memory of struggle for self and spiritual transformation. For Metz, this is the tradition of Israel. For Metz, for a fuller realization of reason there should be interpenetration of both the tradition of Athens and the tradition of Israel. But Habermas in this dialogue, a decade ago, was reluctant to open the tradition of argumentative reason to the tradition of "anamenestic reason" of Israel. But with his contemporary rethinking of faith and reason in which Habermas argues that both sides should go beyond their absolutist claims, he may now be more open to such a foundational border-crossing, which has also deep implications for border crossing between traditions of critical sociology and liberation theology.

24. For Vinayaraj, doing theology involves a "new journey of re-understanding of our faith, theology and ontology. […] doing theology means reconstituting our ontology. Faith is a total commitment to the ongoing journey of finding ourselves dialogically" (2010: 32).

25. Another example of possible border crossing between sociology and theology is the simultaneous moves such as public sociology from sociology and public theology from theology which challenges both these disciplines to

be much more communicative with and responsible to the public (see Clawson et al. 2007; Wilfred 2010). In an Indian context, Dalit theology is an aspect of emergent public theology, but it is not asserting Dalit identity in an exclusionary way. Rather it is a "political theology that re-locates the 'missionized' as the social agents of a democratic civil society and envisage a dialogical community where everyone celebrates together their differentiated identities" (Vinayaraj 2010: 73). It would be insightful to explore further Dalit theology and Dalit sociology together.

26. Clammer is not shy of arguing that when sociologists have lost a sense of the whole it is the theological approach which constantly challenges us to not to forget that we are part of a bigger whole. In the words of Clammer:

> While in a secularized and globalised world in which many faiths contend for attention, as do the insidious demands of the consumerist culture of neo-liberal capitalism, theology (understood in its specifically Christian context) may well appear to have lost its status as 'Queen of the Sciences.' But perhaps not, since not only is (Christian) theology in a globalised world necessarily forced to confront the reality of other faith traditions and to enter into dialogue with them, but it also remains, even today, *the most integral of the disciplines, containing as it does history, linguistics, archaeology, anthropology, textual criticism, sociology, psychology and the applied dimensions of these fields in pastoral care, counseling, development and social work*, as well as its specifically 'religious' dimensions and their expressions in such areas as liturgy. With the rising perception that the roots of our current crisis are essentially spiritual, theology takes on a new salience, as witnessed by the number of students world-wide who enter the discipline with no intention of ever taking up a pastoral career. *In a world in which new models of education are urgently needed, theology, when informed and permeated by an Earth-spirituality (the definition of which in a Christian context is itself a challenge and an adventure), stands poised to renew itself and as such to provide a renewing force in the wider world, far outside the boundaries of the narrowly defined faith community.* (Clammer 2010: 226; emphases added)

> As sociologists we need to pursue the meaning and working of a bigger whole in our lives and society, though this whole is not necessarily the theistic whole of the theologian nor the systematic whole of the believer. The whole that invites both the sociologist and theologian is what philosopher Vattimo (1999) calls a "contingent whole" and Simogy Varga (2009) calls a "limited whole."

27. We may note here that in his insightful essay on M.N. Srinivas, T.N. Madan (2011) talks about the possibility of "transempirical understanding."

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