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## Abstracts

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## ABSTRACTS

Jacques BEAUCHEMIN : *Dumont : historien de l'ambiguïté*

The definition history, for Dumont, can be interpreted in three ways : 1) history as the science of interpretation ; 2) history as communitarian teleology; and 3) history as an ethical summation of the collective experience. However, these three interpretations underlie a relatively ambiguous concept. Indeed, the definition of history as the teleology of the French-Canadian adventure seems to contradict the view of it as a means of participation of all citizens, on a basis of equality, united within the same political community. In fact, it is French-Canadian history that interests Dumont, even when he claims to be examining Québec society. Moreover, the actuality of the debates surrounding nationalism in Québec and elsewhere reminds us how difficult is it to reconcile concurrent memories of experience. This article examines the ambiguity of the Dumontian definition of history in a search for its theoretical and political assumptions. It aims to show why Dumont is forced to shape a universalist conception of history in the mould of the French Canadian singularity, and concludes that the ambiguity of the definition of his concept of history is a matter for the « sciences of society » in a minority setting. Dumont's work must therefore be read in light of the tragic element that lies at the centre of Québec history and of his historical interpretation.

Anne FORTIN : *Penser à partir de Dumont la religion catholique dans la société québécoise*

Fernand Dumont's contribution to the sociology of Québec catholicism is characterized by the exploration of the memory of the Québec society that defined itself as being a religious society, as well as through openness to the future and development of Catholicism. The categories on the basis of which Dumont formed his conception of Québec Catholicism are discussed in this article, and are shown to be fruitful in interpreting the current situation. It is therefore possible to continue his line of inquiry, which has lost nothing of its keenness : according to what parameters can Christian identity be defined ? How is the relationship between faith and culture to be approached ? What is the status of the transcendent in the culture ? What can the place of Catholicism be in the contemporary public space ?

Marcel FOURNIER : *Fernand Dumont et la modernité*

Dumont, a classical sociologist? Dumont, a thinker of modernity? We try to answer these questions by following an original approach that aims to take into consideration not only his writings but also his speeches, including a master class in social philosophy given by Dumont in the spring of 1968. The classical opposition between traditional society and technological society provides the basic structure of his thought. The analysis proposed here aims to avoid the two traps into which one may fall in analysing writings, namely those of celebration or criticism. Instead, it seeks to follow another, more difficult approach, namely that of sociological analysis: the study of the period and of the context, of course, but also of the itinerary followed by Dumont and of the various positions in the academic and intellectual circles. A sociologist and a philosopher, Dumont finds himself in a paradoxical position: his ambition is to « historicize » his society and his personal situation, but he also seeks to give that history (and his history) a universal scope.

Gilles GAGNÉ : *L'anthropologie économique de Fernand Dumont. Sur La dialectique de l'objet économique*

This article proposes a reading of a work by Fernand Dumont, published in 1969, *La dialectique de l'objet économique*, a work in which the author engaged in an epistemological examination of the limitations of the *axiomatic* elements of economics in relation to concrete historical totalities, and contrasted this with a *phenomenology* of the economic world, which takes as its starting point the universal phenomenon of scarcity. The article maintains, first of all, that if the critique of the paucity of abstractions in economic science and the phenomenological assessment of the elementary structures of the economic world, if conducted in parallel, could only confirm the gap that such a two-fold process would aim to fill, in the first instance by neglecting the objective and practical nature of scientific abstractions (*value*, for example), and in the second by presupposing the existence of the economic world that it projects in the categories of a general anthropology (*needs, work, decision*). The article then goes on to suggest that the thinking of Dumont, devoted to the search for new mediations between the « antinomial » terms of social practice rather than to the assessment of historical mediations that identify the « relative autonomy » of its moments, draws on the dualism of religious consciousness. The author sees an illustration of this in the fact that the relations between economic science and the economic world are proposed as specific cases of the *opposition* of the second culture to the first culture, that context of a tragic failing in which Dumont places both the possibility of conscience and the source of his misfortune rather than seeing it as a *detour* through an expressive and critical ideal of which we would have to understand the historical forms in order to recollect what we have become through them, and to retain this for the following stages.

Éric GAGNON : *Une interprétation sociologique est-elle possible ?*

Through a reading of three articles by Fernand Dumont, this article brings out three conditions for the possibility of sociological interpretation: the debate on the unity and nature of society, the reciprocal generating of facts and of values, transparency and the refusal of expertise. This analysis is methodological and draws on two examples: a typology of Dumont, a remarkable example of sociological imagination, and the sociology of health. This leads to the general conclusion that there is no sociology (nor interpretation) without memory.

Fernand HARVEY : *La mémoire, enjeu stratégique de la modernité chez Fernand Dumont*

The writings of Fernand Dumont abound with a recurrent concern about the future of memory in the societies of modernity. Culture could not exist without reference to the past, considered as an element allowing individuals and groups to situate themselves in relation to the world and to give it a meaning. In archaic societies, meaning was transmitted primarily through tradition. By making the future problematic, and therefore subject to interpretations, modern society demands a new construction of memory to give a meaning to action. The historian appears, in this regard, as a prototype of modern man, since he must give account of the prodigious opening to multiple events and of their perpetual contestation. Through the scientific process, the historian faces a phenomenon of duplication similar to that which can be observed in all the humanities: by seeking, through a methodology that is intended to be objective, to reconstitute the facts and to analyse them, he cannot avoid subjectivity, in a sense a residue of the scientific process arising out of a search for meanings that is not sufficiently explicit. Dumont proposes to found a new science of interpretation starting from this residue.

Robert LEROUX : *Fernand Dumont et la sociologie durkheimienne*

The process followed by Fernand Dumont, if examined in detail, is complex and sinuous; it draws inspiration from such a diversity of theoretical currents that at first glance it is sometimes difficult to orient oneself, as though each of the many problems that he studied demanded reference to a particular intellectual corpus. Dumont read very widely. When his thought was in its gestation period, when he initiated himself to sociological knowledge in the early 1950s, he made some fruitful and decisive discoveries. Quite early on, among the founders of sociological thought, he was particularly fascinated by Emile Durkheim. He was attracted both by the theoretical architecture of the latter's writings and by his wide views or his depth of analysis. But this is not all: in contrast to Marx or Weber, for example, Durkheim had the particular distinction of having founded a school, grouped around *L'Année sociologique*, which brought together some of the most brilliant

young minds of the Third Republic, such as Marcel Mauss, Célestin Bouglé, François Simiand and Maurice Halbwachs. By studying the works of the members of the *École française de sociologie*, Dumont discovered an abundance of material enabling him to give additional depth to his own thinking.

Jean-Philippe WARREN : *Habitable exil. La notion d'exil et l'œuvre de Fernand Dumont*

This paper aims not to summarize the set of problems surrounding the theme of exile in the rich and complex writings of Fernand Dumont, nor to repatriate them in their entirety through a form of literary inquiry. Rather, the aim is simply to understand the articulation of his work around the theme of exile, by resituating it in the ideological literary context of Québec during the 1950s - 1960s, if only to demonstrate how attachment to a form of literary inquiry that was quite common during his time was the first condition for accession to a fully universal intellectual line of thought. Rooting a line of thought in the soil of a singular period, far from reducing it or relativizing it, reveals its scope and meaning, like an anxious gaze being cast toward the origins.