

Milton Santos



Toward an Other Globalization: From the Single Thought to Universal Conscience

Translated and Edited by Lucas Melgaço
and Tim Clarke

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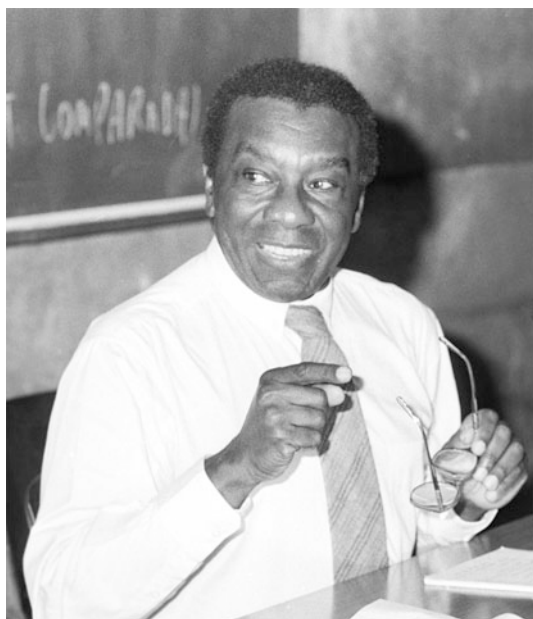
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 Springer

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Milton Santos

Por uma outra globalização: do pensamento único à consciência universal

Toward an Other Globalization
From the Single Thought to Universal
Conscience

Translated and Edited by
Lucas Melgaço and Tim Clarke



Milton Santos, 1994. Photo by Jorge Maruta, from the collection of the magazine *Jornal da USP* (University of São Paulo). Permission to use this photo was granted by the photographer

Introducing Milton Santos: A Voice from the Global South

Our motivation for translating this work by Brazilian geographer Milton Santos into English arose from the frustration of finding his voice so absent from the English-speaking discourse on globalization. Despite Santos's renown throughout Latin America and parts of Europe, for which he received the prestigious Vautrin Lud International Geography Prize in 1994, the most important award in the field, he has been more or less inaccessible to the English-speaking world. Until now, only one text, *The Shared Space: The Two Circuits of the Urban Economy in Underdeveloped Countries*, has been available in English. Originally published in 1975, an English translation by Chris Gerry was produced in 1979. However, the works of Santos's most important phase, from the eighties until his death in 2001, is still unavailable in translation.

Although Santos's reputation is primarily as a specialist in underdevelopment, urbanization and globalization, these labels understate the breadth of his contributions. Santos was a true theoretician who created a set of concepts that could be combined to produce a complex and systematic method for analyzing reality through the lens of the territory, the geographic space. His method also makes prominent use of the idea of the technique, another concept central to his thought. Santos's theoretical framework has been used by other researchers, particularly in Brazil and Latin America, in the study of topics as various as security, transportation, health, economics, cultural studies, urban and rural studies, and so on. He created a veritable school of theory, in the sense that there are scholars today who pursue a clear 'Miltonian' trajectory in their studies.

In an effort to condense the breadth of his theory into a single text, Santos published *A Natureza do Espaço* in 1996, a work that can be counted as the most groundbreaking of his publications. Translated into both Spanish and French, this text has not yet an English version. This begs the question, then, as to why we have instead elected to translate *Por uma Outra Globalização*. Our reasons are many. Firstly, as our English title *Toward an Other Globalization* suggests, this book represents a much needed alternative theory of globalization that derives not from the perspective of the West, from which this process emerged, but from that of the so-called 'Third World,' which has borne the greatest weight of globalization.

In this regard, Santos offers a perspective unavailable to the apologists of Western hegemony. Secondly, our academic experience has shown us the delicacy of introducing students to new and intricate theories. Santos's writings abound in idiosyncrasies and difficulties of interpretation; he is no easy read. *A Natureza do Espaço* is the most substantial of Santos's works, but it not necessarily the best introduction. It is not wrong to claim that a full understanding of such a text can only be arrived at through an extensive reading of Santos's other books and articles, leaving the difficulties of *A Natureza do Espaço* until one has developed the necessary framework to consume it. But if this is indeed the case, where might a prospective reader of Santos begin? Of the nearly forty books produced over Santos's career, we consider *Toward an Other Globalization* to be the most suitable and accessible introduction to his theories, especially for an English audience that, for the time being, is cut off from the other works of his oeuvre. As Santos explains in his preface, this book was intended not only for geographers, but for a broader audience of social scientists. Thus, the examples he uses and the writing style he employs are aimed at a heterogeneous public. In addition, there exists a documentary based on the central premises of this text titled *Encounter with Milton Santos*, produced by Brazilian filmmaker Silvio Tendler, which is subtitled in English and may serve to complement any inquiries this text may provoke. Lastly, *Toward an Other Globalization* was among the last texts published by Santos in his lifetime. Thus, it constitutes one of the most mature works of his career.

Although *Toward an Other Globalization* is one of Santos's more accessible books, it nevertheless bears the author's characteristic difficulty. As a consequence, it is not merely a challenging text to read, but also to translate. Among Santos's particular stylistic hallmarks are innumerable neologisms, a vacillation between very short and extremely long passages, and frequent shifts from formal, highly refined registers to colloquial and vernacular ones. Indeed, some of the articles that make up this book are excerpts of talks Santos gave over his career, and thus maintain traces of their oral style.

Given the differences between the vernacular styles of Portuguese and English, we have occasionally had to take liberties in adapting the text for the sake of clarity. At other points, we have opted for a more conservative translation so as to avoid over-interpreting passages that remain ambiguous in the original text. We are sensitive to the fact that English readers may well object that we have maintained too much of the Lusophone feel and rhythm of the original. On the other hand, Portuguese-speaking readers familiar with Santos's theory may well have the opposite objection, that we have been played too free with the text. But translation, as they say, is an imperfect art. We are of the opinion that it is more important that a first translation of a text be accessible and faithful to the meaning of the source than to its style. We have done our best to maintain some Santos's idiosyncrasies, but it is inevitable that we should lose the full effect, the full poetry, of his prose.

Unlike the Romance languages, contemporary English is not well adapted to the hypotactic sentence structures and extensive use of appositions that are common in Santos's work. It was with this in mind that we reworked passages and expressions that would have been awkward to render in English. We took a relatively free hand

in dividing longer sentences into more manageable ones and in adapting Santos's rhetorical flourishes to an English audience. Furthermore a number of passages that were ambiguous in the original Portuguese were rephrased, sometimes in such a manner that diminished the original ambiguity. We have tried to mark these instances with footnotes in order to explain the possibility for alternative interpretations.

Santos's original text purposefully avoided employing a large number of quotations and bibliographic references in the interests of providing a straightforward analysis. We have retained Santos's citation style without alteration. It must also be noted that this book was originally published without footnotes. All footnotes included in this edition are the insertions of the translators and not of Santos himself, and have been added in order to present the reader with notes on our choice of translation, information about the Brazilian context of Santos's works, and comments elucidating concepts that derive from the author's earlier texts. These footnotes reflect no opinions or interpretations but those of the translators, and ought not to be confused with the positions and sentiments of the author.

We encountered further difficulties in deciding how to translate the frequent use of the universal masculine pronoun, which is quite common in Romance languages, but may be considered politically incorrect in English. We have decided not to maintain the author's wording, preferring to replace the general term 'man' by 'person', 'humanity' or 'humankind'. In the case of the universal pronoun 'he', we have preferred general constructions with the pronoun 'one'. We have also made adjustments to phrasing in some sections to facilitate the reading experience. Where possible, we have used English titles for books that Santos references which have English translations. For example, John Gray's *False Dawn* is referenced in Portuguese in the original, but has been rendered in English in this translation. Those originally written in other languages have been written in the title Santos cites for them. Where necessary, we have translated some plural words and concepts in the singular, and vice versa, for ease of reading. The punctuation and style conventions of the original have also been adapted for an English audience. In some cases, we have simplified sentences where two words in Portuguese designate a single concept in English. Both 'calendário' and 'folhinha' (a specific kind of religious calendar utilized in Brazil), for instance, have been translated as 'calendar', since English does not make a distinction between the two words and the difference between them has no significant bearing on the meaning of the passage in question. Lastly, we have made the editorial decision to standardize what appear to be unintentional irregularities in the source text, opting, for example, to capitalize the word 'Triad', which appears inconsistently in both the upper and lower case in the original text.

It is also worth noting that this book was written to a specific context, which involved a specific space and time. Although globalization is a topic of general interest, the text was written first and foremost for a Brazilian audience. Thus, some references and examples may be unfamiliar to other audiences. All references to 'this country', or 'this territory' are to be read as references to Brazil. Given that this text was published in 2000, references to 'the rise of the new century' are obviously

in reference to the one in which we currently live. We should also note that *Toward an Other Globalization* was written just prior to such important and paradigmatic events as the 9/11 attacks against the United States, which introduced new and vital perspectives into the discourse surrounding globalization. In some ways, Santos's theory offers new tools to our understanding of such phenomena, particularly in his discussions of counter-rationality. The Brazilian economic environment has also changed drastically since the time of Santos's observations. In the intervening years, Brazil has experienced a period of rapid economic growth. The political situation has also changed, with the resurgence of left-oriented parties at the state and federal level. Most importantly of all, though, is the fact that in spite of all this, the bulk of the injustices against which Santos positions himself and the overall structure of inequality remain intact.

Translating Santos is at the same time a privilege and a delicate labour. We have come to experience more fully the richness and breadth of his work, its persistent applicability to the present day, and the prescience of its observations; we have even come to see some of the limitations of his theory. On the other hand, the labour of translation must be sensitive to the fact that Santos is a well-established public intellectual in many circles, particularly in Brazilian ones. Consequently, we bear the responsibility for translating his work in a manner that does him justice. Thus, we have undertaken this work in concert with one another and with the hope that our backgrounds and expertise have allowed us to carry this project to a satisfactory conclusion. It is our hope that our varied backgrounds and expertise has contributed to the production of something that can be of help to future readers. One of us is a Brazilian geographer and Assistant Professor at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) in Belgium specializing in Milton Santos's theories and the other is a Canadian doctoral candidate in English literature at the University of Ottawa. The translation was conducted through an intensive back-and-forth exchange of drafts, so that no section has been published that has not had the eyes of a native speaker of both Portuguese and English over the course of multiply drafts.

In some parts of Brazil, particularly in some departments of geography, Santos is known simply as 'the Professor'. Whether we consider this an exaggeration or not, it is a testament to the profound influence of his thought. One can recognize, in fact, a sharp divide in Brazilian academia between supporters and detractors of Santos's ideas. When the present text was first published in Brazil, its author was already well-known, and so, too, were his concepts and style. The situation at hand is quite different, as we are here introducing his work into a context where his niche is a small one, well aware that many may be encountering Santos for the first time. It is with this in mind that we have strived to produce a translation that is both accurate and accessible. Our task of introducing this text to an English-speaking audience is indebted to Marie-Hélène Santos, the late author's wife. Marie-Hélène has been foremost among those striving to preserve Santos's legacy and to bring his life's work to the attention of those for whom it has remained inaccessible. We would like to offer our sincere thanks for her support and counsel over the course of this project.

Although innovative in many ways, perhaps the most genuine contribution that this text offers to an English audience, more than its value as an analysis of empirical cases, is the fact that it addresses globalization not from the West, but from what Santos calls ‘the South,’ the other side of this globalized world. It is from this perspective that Santos is able to conclude his book with a message of optimism that is not in any sense naïve. This is, indeed, a revolutionary optimism and an *other* globalization.

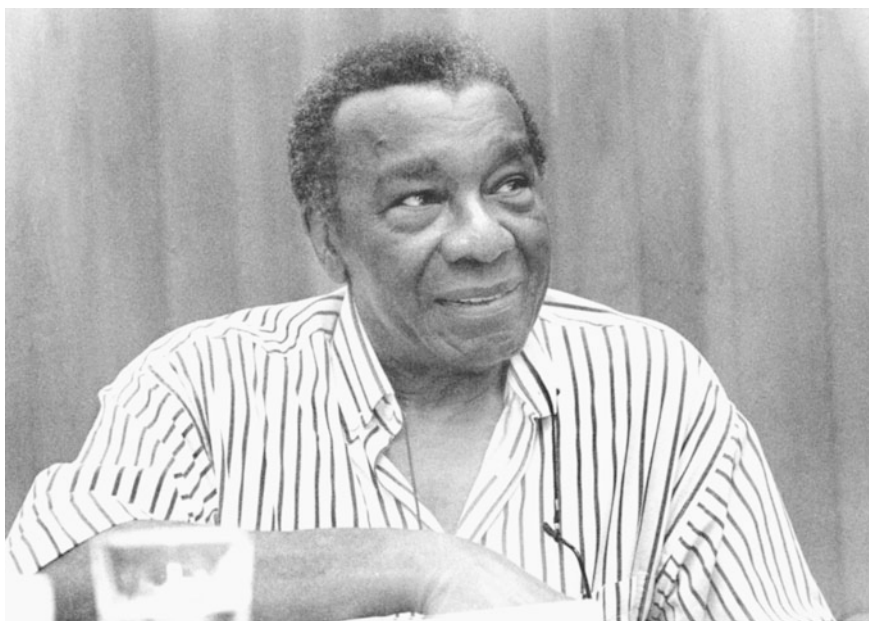
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Lucas Melgaço
Tim Clarke

Preface

This book hopes to be an independent reflection on our time, a meditation on its material and political foundations, and an attempt to explain the pains and problems of the present world. However, despite the difficulties of the present era, it also seeks to be a message bearer of the objective reasons to continue living and fighting.

The intellectual work that sustains this text is the fruit borne of our dedication to understanding the nature of geographic space, but it also pays tribute to other realities and academic disciplines.



Milton Santos, 1994. Photo by Jorge Maruta, from the collection of the magazine *Jornal da USP* (University of São Paulo)

In contrast with our other books, the reader is not going to find here a copious listing of quotations. Such books of ours were focused on more specific questions of society and were genuine theses, since they were sustained and ambitious demonstrations directed above all at the scientific community. This direction pushed the author to make concessions of lengthy bibliographies to the small world of his colleagues. It is well known that this has become almost an obligation of scholarship, since the academy enjoys citations, even if they are idle or sometimes ridiculous. Undoubtedly, this book also directs itself to scholars, but above all else desires to reach the greater public. Thus, it dispenses with the ceremonial obligation of references. That is not to say that the author imagines himself to have reinvented the wheel; his experience in different moments of the century and in various countries and continents is also the experience of those others whom he has heard or read. However, the originality here is in the interpretation or the particular emphasis, the unique manner of combining what exists and what is foreseen: the very definition of what constitutes an idea.

This book results from a great deal of arduous and pleasing work. Most of its chapters have not been published in their present form, as they are, in a certain way, a rewriting of lectures, conferences, newspaper and magazine articles, and media interviews, each one offering a particular level of discourse and difficulty. I am very thankful to all those with whom I collaborated in this dialogue and even to those who were unaware of participating in such an exchange. Amongst the former, I want to highlight the current partners in the ambitious academic project which I have been leading at the Department of Geography at the University of São Paulo since 1983: my tireless collaborator, Doctor María Laura Silveira, who read the assembled manuscript, and Doctor Maria Angela Faggin Pereira Leite, as well as the PhD candidates Adriana Bernardes, Cilene Gomes and Mónica Arroyo, and the Master's students Eliza Almeida, Fábio Contel, Flávia Grimm, Lídia Antongiovanni, Marcos Xavier, Paula Borin and Soraia Ramos. I also extend thanks to the Department of Geography of the Faculty of Philosophy, Languages and Literature, and Human Sciences, which hosts and stimulates me. My particular acknowledgements go, too, to the Political Geography and Territorial and Environmental Laboratory (Laboplan), coordinated by my old friend Armen Mamigonian. I want to also thank my colleagues Maria Adélia A. de Souza, Rosa Ester Rossini, and Ana Clara Torres Ribeiro, with whom I have collaborated for about twenty years.

I am also indebted to the voluntary collaborators I encountered in numerous travels around Brazil, those participants at conferences, debates, and meetings, for their interventions and suggestions. I am grateful to the newspapers *Folha de São Paulo* and *Correio Braziliense* for their authorization to republish my articles in their original or modified forms. While still in this chapter of acknowledgements, a special word goes to the geographer Flávia Grimm, who had the patience to listen to tiring dictations of the manuscripts from which this book results. The assistance of the geographer Paula Borin was found once more to be valuable. I am also sensitive to the support received from the *Council for Scientific and Technological Development* (CNPq) and the *São Paulo Research Foundation* (FAPESP). These

two institutions did not contribute directly to this work, but intellectual production is always a unit made up of parts. A work or body of research is always a sub-product of others. Also, as always, the incentive of my wife, Marie-Hélène, was very precious.

Contrary to the French author Joël de Rosnay, who suggested in the preface of his book *Le Macroscopie* that his readers begin to read wherever they please, we must give a different warning. If someone reads only the first chapters separately, one might consider the author a pessimist; and those who start from the later chapters might imagine him an optimist. In reality, what we intended was, on the one hand, to treat reality as it is, even if it is undesirably pungent; and, on the other, to suggest reality as it can be, even if our prognostication might sound laughable to skeptics.

The central emphasis of this book comes from the conviction of the role of ideology in the production, dissemination, reproduction, and maintenance of the current process of globalization. This role is also a novelty of our time; hence, the necessity to analyze its fundamental principles and to point out its lines of weakness and strength. Our insistence on the role of ideology derives from our conviction that, given the same technical and material conditions presently existing, just as it is possible to continue making an inferno of the planet, as Brazil is currently experiencing, it is also possible to realize its contrary. Thus, the relevance of politics, which is to say, the art of imagining changes and creating the conditions to bring them into effect. Moreover, the transformations that recent history has shown have allowed us to predict the emergence of more promising situations. One might say that our belief in the change of humankind is unjustifiable. But what if it is the world, indeed, that is changing?

We are convinced that the historical change that is to happen will issue from an upward movement having as its principal actors the underdeveloped rather than the rich countries; the deserted and the poor rather than the opulent and other obese classes; the free individual participating in new masses rather than the chained person; free thought rather than the single discourse.

As we believe in the power of ideas at this moment of history, for better or for worse, we intend to show in filigree how the scholar's role, which is to say, the role of free thought, will be increasingly necessary in the current world. For this reason, we intended in the first drafts of this book to dedicate a chapter exclusively to genuine intellectual activity. However, we decided instead to discuss this role in different moments of the writing process, always when the opportunity was raised.

The book is made up of six chapters, of which the first is the introduction. The second chapter includes five subchapters¹ and seeks to show how the process of the production of globalization has occurred. This subject has already been treated to a degree in our other books and publications. The third chapter, made up of six subchapters, aims to explain the reasons why the present globalization is perverse,

¹Translators' Note: In Santos's original text, the introductions to each chapter were not numbered. The number of subchapters he mentions therefore refer to the main body of the work.

founded in the tyranny of information and money, in competitiveness, in the confusion of spirits, and in structural violence, leading to the downfall of the politics of the state and the imposition of a politics promoted by companies. The fourth chapter shows the relations maintained between the contemporary economy, above all the financial sector, and the territory. Six subchapters make up this chapter, the last of which could also be included in the chapter which follows, since it shows, through the notion of territorial schizophrenia, how the geographic space constitutes one of the limits of this perverse globalization. This idea of a limit to present history predominates in the fifth chapter, where the failures of the dominant rationality, the emergence of new central variables, and the role of the poor in the production of the present and the future are demonstrated. The sixth chapter, a sort of conclusion, is dedicated to what we imagine to be, in the rise of this new century, the ongoing transition. Here, the analyzed subjects highlight the under-studied manifestations of the country from below, from culture to politics. This reasoning can also be applied to the very periphery of the worldwide capitalist system, the centrality of which is present as a new dynamic factor of history. It is precisely the presence of these actors, effective but under-studied, that allowed us to believe that the present globalization is not irreversible. We are convinced that universal history is only starting.

São Paulo, Brazil
2000

Milton Santos

Chapter 1

General Introduction

1.1 The World as Fable, as Perversity, and as Possibility

We live in a world that is both confusing and confusingly perceived. Is there a paradox in this notion requiring an explanation? Abusively mentioned, on the one hand, is the extraordinary progress of the sciences and the techniques, the fruits of which are new artificial materials that enable precision and intentionality. On the other hand, this world is marked by the contemporary acceleration and all the vertigo which it creates, starting from velocity itself. All of these, however, are characteristics of a physical world fabricated by people. The utilization of this fabricated existence, it might be added, allows the world to become confused and confusingly perceived. Nevertheless, mechanistic explanations are insufficient. The way human history is produced over this material foundation is the true culprit of the creation of this Tower of Babel in which our globalized era resides. When everything leads us to think that the creation of a true world is possible, what is imposed upon the spirit is a world of fabulations that takes advantage of the enlargement of all contexts¹ (M. Santos, *A Natureza do Espaço*, 1996) in order to consecrate a single discourse. This discourse is underpinned by the role of information and its empire. This empire of information, which finds sustenance in the production of images and of the imaginary, is in the service of an empire of money that is founded on the economization and monetization of social and personal life.

In fact, if we wish to escape the dictum which says that the world as it is presented is true, and if we do not want to accept the permanence of its misleading perception, then we should consider the existence of at least three worlds in one.

¹Translators' Note: The concept of the enlargement of contexts that Santos proposes is related to the increase in quantity and quality of exchanges in the current informational period. Thus, what is occurring in one context can be shared and expanded to different and distant contexts by the intermediation of networks. This concept is directly related to the other four concepts the author utilizes later in the second part of the book in order to characterize globalization: technical unicity, the convergence of moments, the single motor, and the knowability of the planet.

The first would be the world as they make it seem: globalization as fable; the second would be the world as it is: globalization as perversity; and, the third, the world as it can be: an other globalization.

1.1.1 The World as They Make Us Believe: Globalization as Fable

This globalized world, seen as fable, erects a certain number of fantasies as truths. The repetition of these fantasies, however, can constitute an apparently solid foundation of the interpretation of the world (Maria da Conceição Tavares, *Destruição não criadora*, 1999).

The ideological machine that sustains the preponderant actions of the present is made of pieces that feed on each other and put in motion the elements essential to the continuity of the system. Here are some examples: one might use the concept of the global village to convince us that the instantaneous diffusion of news really informs people. Through this myth, and also through the myth that distances have been curtailed—something true only for those who can really travel—the notion of the contraction of space and time is disseminated. It is as if the world has become within arm's reach for everybody. An all-consuming market, said to be global, is presented as if it were capable of homogenizing the planet when, in reality, local differences are exacerbated. There is a quest for uniformity in the service of hegemonic actors, yet the world is becoming less unified and the dream of a truly universal citizenship is becoming more distant. Meanwhile, the cult of consumerism has been incentivized.

One speaks as much, and with as much insistence, of the death of the state. However, what we are experiencing is the strengthening of the state in order to satisfy the claims of the financial sector and other large international interests, all at the expense of populations whose lives are becoming more difficult.

Rather than the end of ideology proclaimed by those who believe in the goodness of the present process of globalization, these few examples, gathered from an endless list, permit one to wonder if we are not, in fact, in the presence of a massive ideologization. According to this ideologization, the realization of the present world would have the exercise of fabulations as one of its essential conditions.

1.1.2 The World as It Is: Globalization as Perversity

In fact, globalization is imposing itself as a factory of perversities upon the greater part of humanity. Growing unemployment is becoming chronic. Poverty is expanding and the quality of life of the middle classes is declining. Average salaries are tending to decrease. Famine and homelessness are spreading to all continents.

New diseases such as AIDS are settling down, and old ones, supposedly extirpated, are returning triumphantly. Infant mortality remains in spite of medical developments and the dissemination of information. Good-quality education is increasingly difficult to access. Spiritual and moral disorders such as egoism, cynicism, and corruption are spreading and intensifying.

The systemic perversity at the root of this negative evolution of humanity is related to a broad adherence to the competitive behaviours which presently characterize hegemonic actions. All these ills are directly or indirectly imputable to the present process of globalization.

1.1.3 The World as It Can Be: An Other Globalization

However, we can imagine the creation of another world through a more humane globalization. The material foundations of the present period are, amongst others, the unicity of techniques, the convergence of moments, and the knowability of the planet. These technical foundations underpin big capital in order to produce the perverse globalization mentioned above. Yet, the same technical foundations can serve a different purpose if they are put in the service of different social and political purposes. It seems that the historical conditions of the end of the twentieth century point toward this last possibility. Thus, such new conditions exist both at the empirical and theoretical level.

If we take into account what is presently verified in the empirical field, we can in the first place recognize a certain number of new facts that indicate the emergence of a new history. The first of these facts is this enormous mixture of peoples, races, cultures, and tastes across all continents. In addition to this, and due to the progress of information, there is a 'mixture' of philosophies, regardless of European rationalism. Another characteristic of our era, indicative of the possibilities of change, is the production of a concentrated population in increasingly small areas, which brings even more dynamism to that mixture between people and philosophies. The masses, to which Ortega y Gasset made reference in the first half of the century (*La rebelión de las masas*, 1937), gain a new importance due to their exponential concentration and diversification. We are dealing here with the appearance of a true socio-diversity, historically much more significant than bio-diversity itself. In addition to these facts, a popular culture is emerging and exercising a genuine revenge on mass culture. This revenge is achieved by the use of technical media previously utilized exclusively by the promoters of mass culture.

The discourse of scarcity, finally discovered by the masses, is built upon these foundations. The concentration of populations into a few points of the Earth's surface constitutes one of the foundations of reconstruction and of the survival of local relationships, which in turn opens up the possibility of utilizing the present technical system in the service of humanity.

Moreover, from a theoretical perspective, we now have a chance to produce a new discourse, a new meta-narrative, a new and important testament. This new discourse gains relevance by the fact that, for the first time in human history, it is possible to verify the existence of an empirical universality. Universality is no longer only an abstract elaboration in philosophers' minds, but can now be produced by the ordinary experience of each individual. Thus, in such a date-conscious world as ours, an explanation of the happening² can be made through the categories of a concrete history, which allows us to be aware of the present possibilities of action and to write a new history.

²T.N.: Santos utilizes the concept of happening (*acontecer* in Portuguese) at several points in his writings, which justifies our literal translation. The concept can be understood as something close to 'existence'. However, while the term 'existence' implies a certain permanence, the notion of happening is related to the brevity of everyday practices.

Chapter 2

The Production of Globalization

2.1 Introduction

Globalization is, in a certain sense, the apex of the internationalization of the capitalist world. In order to understand it, just as any other phase of history, there are two fundamental elements to take into account: the state of techniques and the state of politics.

There is a tendency to separate one thing from the other, which results in many interpretations of history from the perspective of techniques and, on the other hand, interpretations of history from the perspective of politics. In reality, there was never in human history a separation between these two things. Techniques are offered as a system and realized in a combined way, both through labour and the manner by which the moments and places of the use of techniques are chosen. This is how history was produced.¹

At the end of the twentieth century and because of advances in science, a system of techniques was produced presided over by the techniques of information. These techniques began to serve as a link between the others, uniting them and ensuring that the new technical system would be present all across the planet.

But globalization is not only the existence of this new system of techniques. It is also the result of actions that assure the emergence of the so-called global market, which is responsible for the essence of the political processes effective in the present. The factors that contribute to the understanding of the present architecture of globalization are: the unicity of techniques, the convergence of moments, the knowability of the planet, and the existence of a single motor of history, represented by globalized surplus value. A global market utilizing such a system of advanced techniques results in this perverse globalization. However, this situation could be different if the political use of these techniques were other than it is. This is the

¹T.N.: There is an ambiguity in this sentence that is impossible to replicate in English. Santos's Portuguese could be interpreted as 'This is what history produced', or as 'This is how history was produced'. We have opted for the latter, which strikes us as being more logically consistent.

central debate, the only one that permits us to have the hope of utilizing the contemporary technical system through other forms of action. We intend here to face this discussion by briefly analyzing some of its most relevant constitutional aspects.

2.2 Technical Unicity

The development of history occurs side by side with the development of techniques. Kant said that history is a progress without end; we would add here that it is also an endless progress of techniques. With each technical evolution, a new historical phase becomes possible.

The techniques exist as a sort of family. Nowhere in the history of humankind does a technique appear in isolation; what is installed is a group of techniques, true systems. A trivial example would be the sickle, the hoe, and the rake, which constitute, at a given moment, a family of techniques.

These families of techniques transport a history; each technical system represents an epoch. In our epoch, the arrival of the technique of information through cybernetics, computing, electronics, and so on, is representative of the present technical system. The technique of information will thus permit two important things: firstly, it will allow the various techniques to begin communicating between themselves. This technique assures such an exchange, something that in the past would have been impossible. On the other hand, information has a determinant role in the use of time, permitting everywhere the convergence of moments, assuring the simultaneity of actions and, consequently, accelerating the historical process.

Every time a new family of techniques appears, the others persist. They continue to exist, but the new ensemble of instruments comes to be used by the new hegemonic actors, while the non-hegemonic actors continue to utilize less current and less powerful ensembles. Due to this process, an actor who does not meet the conditions necessary to mobilize those techniques considered to be more advanced becomes an actor of minor importance in the present period.

It is the first time in human history that such an ensemble of techniques involves the planet as a whole and makes its presence felt instantaneously. This, it might be mentioned, contaminates the form of existence of the other less developed techniques. Even if they are present only in a single point of territory, the characteristic techniques of our time have a marked influence over the rest of the country in a way that is quite different from past situations. For example, the first Brazilian railways installed in selected, strategically chosen regions only reached a certain portion of the country and did not have a direct influence over the rest of the territory. No longer. The techniques of information now reach the totality of each country, directly or indirectly. Each place has access to the happenings of the others. The principle of selectivity also exists as a principle of hierarchy, since all places are evaluated and must make reference to those places imbued with hegemonic

techniques. This is a new phenomenon in the history of techniques and in the history of territories. Once, there were hegemonic and non-hegemonic techniques; today, the non-hegemonic techniques are being hegemonized. In reality though, the technique cannot be seen as an absolute given, but as a technique already relativized, in other words, such as used by humanity. The techniques only materialize, becoming history, with the intermediation of politics, that is, the politics of companies and the politics of states, together or separately.

On the other hand, the technical system that is dominant in today's world has another characteristic, that of being invasive. This dominant system does not confine itself to staying where it had been installed, but seeks to spread itself into production and the territory. Such an attempt may result in failure, but this is the vocation of the present technical system, a vocation which also serves as the foundation of the actions of hegemonic actors like the global companies. These companies function in a fragmented way, since a portion of their production can be made in Tunisia, another in Malaysia, and another even in Paraguay, but this is only possible because the aforementioned hegemonic technique is present, or can be present, everywhere. Everything is put together at a later moment and articulated through the 'intelligence' of the company. Otherwise, the existence of multinational enterprises would be impossible. There is, then, a narrow relationship between this aspect of the economy of globalization and the nature of the technical phenomenon correspondent to this technical period. If the production is technically fragmented, there is on the other side a political unity of command. This political unity of command works within firms, but there is no proper unicity of command of the global market. Each company commands the respective operations within its respective topology, which is to say, inside the ensemble of places of its action, while the actions of the state and of the supranational institutions are not enough to impose a global order. Extending this reasoning to an extreme, one could say that the global market does not exist as such.

There is a relationship of cause and effect between the present technical progress and the other typical characteristics of the current historical period. It is through the unicity of techniques, of which the computer is a central aspect, that the possibility for the existence of a universal finance is raised. This sector is the one principally responsible for the imposition of a worldwide surplus value across the entire globe. Without technical unicity, the present unicity of time would also be impossible, the local happening being perceived as a link of the worldwide happening. On the other hand, without globalized surplus value and without this unicity of time, the unicity of techniques would be ineffective.

2.3 The Convergence of Moments

The unicity of time does not merely mean that clock time is the same in several different places. It is not only this. If the hour is the same, the lived moments also converge. There exists a confluence of moments in response to that which would be

called real time from the point of view of physics and, from the perspective of history, the interdependency and solidarity² of the happening. Taken as a physical phenomenon, the perception of real time does not only mean that clock time is the same, but also that we can use these multiple clocks in a uniform manner. As a result of the scientific and technical progress which accelerated in the wake of the Second World War, the planet-wide operation of large global companies revolutionized the financial world, allowing its respective market to function in various places 24 h a day. Real time permits the usage of the same moment from multiple places, and all places from only one place, in both instances in a concatenated and effective manner.

With this substantial change in history, we become capable of knowing what is the happening of the other regardless of our location. This possibility of having instantaneous knowledge of the happening of the other in our hands, offered by technique to our generation, has never existed before. This is the great novelty that we are calling the unicity of time, or the convergence of moments. The acceleration of history witnessed by the end of the twentieth century derives largely from this condition of unicity. However, instantaneous and globalized information is still neither generalized nor true, since it is currently intermediated by large information companies.

And who are the actors of real time? All of us? This question is imperative if we are to understand our epoch. The ideology of a single world and of a global village considers real time as a collective patrimony of humankind. Yet we are still far from this ideal, however achievable it may be.

History is guided by the preeminent actors of this real time who are, at the same time, the possessors of velocity and the authors of the ideological discourse. However, all persons are not equal authors of this time. Physically, which is to say, potentially, real time exists for everybody. Effectively, though, that is, socially, it is exclusionary and assures exclusivity, or at least the privileges of its use, to some actors. Since real time is utilized by a reduced number of actors, one must distinguish between the notions of potential fluidity and effective fluidity. If techniques apparently create the possibility of fluidity for all, who is actually fluid? Which people? Who, exactly, utilizes this real time in their own favour? Who really owns the surplus value created from the new possibilities of the utilization of time? Who can and cannot utilize these possibilities? This discussion takes us to another on the present phase of capitalism when we take into account the emergence of a new determinant factor of history, represented here by what we are denoting the single motor.

²T.N.: Santos frequently uses the terms 'solidary' and 'solidarity' in his writings. They do not have the exclusive connotations of help, charity or altruism, but also stand for the connections, agreements, and combinations formed between agents. Thus, depending on the passage in question, these words may have a more neutral connotation than would be commonly understood in English.

2.4 The Single Motor

The present period makes use of a system of unified techniques, a system that, installed over an informed planet, permits global actions. Up to what point can one talk about a surplus value on a worldwide scale, acting as a single motor of such actions?

With imperialism there were several motors, each one with its own force and range: the French motor, the English motor, the German motor, the Portuguese motor, the Belgian, the Spanish, and so on, all of which were motors of capitalism, but which pushed machines and humans in different rhythms, different modalities, different combinations. Today there is a single motor, which is precisely the aforementioned universal surplus value.

Universal surplus value has become possible since production, from here on out, is being made on a universal scale. This production is intermediated by global companies which compete between themselves according to an extremely ferocious competition that we have never before witnessed. Those who resist and survive are those who obtain the greater surplus value, which allows them to continue acting and competing.

This single motor has become possible because we find ourselves at a new stage of internationalization, with a true mundialization³ of products, money, credit, debt, consumption, and information. This ensemble of mundializations, one supporting and dragging along the other, and mutually imposing themselves, is another new fact.

One element of internationalization attracts another, imposes another, contains and is contained by the other. This system of forces can lead one to think that the world is moving toward something like homogenization, an inclination toward a single pattern due, on the one hand, to the mundialization of techniques, and on the other, to the mundialization of surplus value.

All of this is real, but it is also and above all a tendency, because nowhere and in no country was there a complete internationalization. What exists everywhere is an inclination toward the most diverse combination of vectors and forms of mundialization.

There is a wish now that history be moved by this single motor. It is important, then, to ask about the nature of this motor. Is it abstract? What is this surplus value when considered at the global level? It is elusive and escapes from us, but it is not abstract. It exists and imposes itself as something real despite not being precisely measurable, since it is always evolving, changing. Surplus value is 'worldwide' because it is upheld by global companies that count on the scientific and technical

³T.N.: Milton Santos utilizes the Portuguese terms *mundialização*, which derives from the French *mondialisation*, and *globalização*, which derives from English. In order to preserve Santos's style and the subtle distinction between his terms, we have translated *mundialização* with the English neologism 'mundialization', rather than as 'globalization'.

progress available in the world and each day request more scientific and technical progress.

The present competitiveness between companies is a form by which this universal surplus value is exercised, which becomes evasive precisely because we have left the world of competition and entered the world of competitiveness. The exercise of competitiveness makes the fight between companies exponential and leads them to create a diurnal demand for even more science, technology, and organization in order to keep themselves ahead of the pack.

When we are asked every day at the university to work in order to improve productivity as if it were something abstract and individual, we are driven to offer even greater possibilities for the large companies to augment their surplus value. New laboratories are pushed to discover the new techniques, the new materials, the new organizational and political solutions that permit the growth of companies' productivity and profit. With each advance by one company, another in the same field demands innovations to permit it to overtake the former leader. Because of this, such surplus value is always running, that is, escaping ahead of the others. A cut in time is ideally possible, but it is far from expressing the present, cruelly unstable reality. Given the above, it is not possible to measure universal surplus value, yet it exists. Despite seeming abstract, this surplus value in reality imposes itself as an empirical and objective fact when utilized in the process of production and as a result of competitiveness.

2.5 The Knowability of the Planet

The present historical period will permit what no other period has offered to humanity: the possibility of knowing the planet in an extensive and deep manner. This knowability has never before existed and is due precisely to the progress of science and techniques (better still, owing to the progress of techniques due to the progress of science).

This techno-scientific period of history permits humanity to go beyond the simple utilization of what they encounter in nature: new materials have been created in laboratories as a product of humanity's intelligence and they precede the production of objects. Up until our generation, we utilized the materials that were available to us, but from now on we are able to conceive the objects we wish to utilize and then produce the raw materials which are indispensable to their production. Without this, it would have been impossible to create the satellites that take pictures of the planet at regular intervals, permitting a more complete and detailed vision of the Earth. Through the use of satellites, we began to know not only different places, but all places, and to observe other stars. The functioning of the solar system is becoming more perceptible and Earth itself can now be seen in detail. By the fact that satellites repeat their orbits, we are able to capture successive moments, that is, no longer only momentary pictures and isolated photographs of the planet. This does not mean that we are able to capture the historical processes

that move the world, but we are getting closer to identifying the moments of this evolution. Portrayed objects give us geometries, not exactly geographies, since they come to us as objects in themselves but without the society that lives inside them. The meaning of things, that is, their true value, is the foundation of the correct interpretation of everything that exists. Without this, we risk not being able to go beyond a thing-based interpretation of something that is more than a simple thing, such as the objects of history. These objects are constantly changing their meanings with the movement of societies and through the intermediation of continuously renewed human actions.

With globalization and through the empiricization of the universality that globalization made possible, we are getting closer to creating a philosophy of techniques and of correlated actions; a philosophy that is also a way of concretely knowing the world taken as a whole and knowing the particularity of places, which includes physical, natural, and artificial characteristics and political conditions. Yet, companies, in the quest for their desired surplus value, assess locations differently. Not all places are equally interesting to this or that company. Thus, the knowability of the planet constitutes an essential requirement of the operation of companies and of the production of the present historical system.

2.6 A Period That Is a Crisis

The history of capitalism can be divided into periods, pieces of time hallmarked by a certain coherence between their distinguished variables. These sections of time evolve differently, but within a system. A period succeeds another period, though we should not forget that periods are also preceded and followed by crises, that is, moments when the established order between variables, mediated by an organization, is compromised. It becomes impossible to harmonize them when one of these variables gains a greater expression and introduces a principle of disorder.

This was, until now, the evolution that is common to every history of capitalism. The present period escapes this characteristic because it is at the same time a period and a crisis, which is to say, the present fraction of historical time constitutes a true superposition between period and crisis, revealing characteristics of both situations.

As a period and as a crisis, the present epoch appears as something new. As a period, its characteristic variables establish themselves everywhere and influence everything, directly or indirectly. That is why we call it globalization. As a crisis, the same variables that build the system are continuously collapsing and requiring new definitions and arrangements. However, we are now experiencing a persistent crisis within a period with lasting characteristics, even if new contours appear.

This period and this crisis are different from those of the past. This is because its motors and respective bases, which constitute factors of change, do not gradually install themselves as before, nor are they any longer a privilege of some continents and countries. Such factors exist concomitantly and realize themselves everywhere and in a very intense manner.

We are now facing an extreme subdivision of empirical time, the documentation of which became possible through the use of contemporary techniques. The computer is both the measuring tool and the controller of time's usage. In reality, this multiplication of time is mostly potential since each actor—person, company, institution, place—utilizes such possibilities differently and differently realizes the velocity of the world. On the other hand, and due above all to the progress of computer techniques, the hegemonic factors of change contaminate the others, even if the velocity and the range of this contagion varies according to companies, social groups, persons, and places. By the intermediation of money, the contagion of the reductive logic typical of the process of globalization spreads an economic nexus everywhere, which overwhelms everything. The aforementioned factors of change, led by the hands of the hegemonic actors, are blind, egoistically contradictory, and uncontrollable.

The process of crisis is permanent; what we have are successive crises. In reality, this is a global crisis, made evident both by global phenomena and singular manifestations in this or that country, in this or that moment, producing the new stage of crisis. Nothing is lasting.

In this historical period the crisis is structural; hence, when one seeks non-structural solutions, the result is the creation of more crisis. That which is considered to be a solution derives from the exclusive interest of hegemonic actors and tends to favour their nature and characteristics.

The tyrannies of money and information are the pillars of the production of the present globalized capitalism. Without the control of spirits, the regulation promoted by finance would be impossible. The result would be the overwhelming of the financial system and the permissiveness of the behaviour of the hegemonic actors, who act without reciprocation. This leads to the worsening of the situation, that is, of the crisis.

The association between the tyranny of money and the tyranny of information leads, thus, to the acceleration of hegemonic processes. These processes are legitimated by the 'single thought', while the other processes are swallowed or adapt themselves passively or actively, becoming hegemonized. In other words, the non-hegemonic processes tend either to disappear physically or to remain, though in a subordinated manner. This is the case with the exception of some areas of social life and in certain fractions of the territory where the processes can remain relatively autonomous, that is, capable of self-reproduction. However, such a situation is always precarious, either because the locally obtained results are less significant, or because the respective agents are permanently threatened by the concurrence of the most powerful activities.

In the present historical period, the structural aspect (which is to say, the dynamic one) is also critical. This is due, amongst other reasons, to the fact that the present is characterized by the extreme use of techniques and norms. The extreme use of techniques and the prominence of technical thought lead to the obsessive necessity of norms. This plethora of norms is indispensable to the efficacy of action. However, because hegemonic activities tend toward centralization, consecutive

with the concentration of the economy, it increases the inflexibility of behaviours, leading to an uneasiness within the social body.

One should add to this the fact that, due to the marriage between normative techniques and the technical and political normalization of the correspondent action, politics itself ends up penetrating all the interstices of the social body, either as a necessity in the exercise of dominant actions or as the reactions to such actions. This is not exactly related to politics, though, but to a mere accumulation of particularistic normalizations promoted by private actors that ignore the social interest or that treat it in a residual manner. This is another reason why the standard situation is one of crisis, even if the famous macro-economical equilibrium establishes itself.

The same ideological system that justifies the process of globalization and reinforces it as the only historical path also imposes, in the end, a certain vision of the crisis and an acceptance of the suggested remedies. As a consequence, all countries, places, and persons begin to behave, to organize their action, as if such a 'crisis' were the same to everybody and as if the formulae by which they could be deterred were typically the same. Indeed, the only crisis that the responsible agents wish to deter is the financial crisis—this, and no other. As a matter of fact, this is a cause for the worsening of the real crisis—economical, social, political, moral—that characterizes our time.

Chapter 3

A Perverse Globalization

3.1 Introduction

The last years of the twentieth century witnessed great changes all across the face of the Earth. The world became unified by virtue of the new technical conditions that served as solid foundations for worldwide human action. However, this action imposes itself upon the greater part of humanity as a perverse globalization.

Let us consider in the first place the emergence of a double tyranny, that of money and that of information, which are intimately correlated. Together, both provide the bases of the ideological system that legitimates the most characteristic actions of this epoch. At the same time, this double tyranny looks to conform social and interpersonal relations to a new *ethos*, thus influencing people's characters. The competitiveness suggested by production and consumption is the source of new totalitarianisms that are more easily accepted due to the installation of a confusion of spirits. The production, at the very basis of the social life, of a structural violence has similar origins, which can be easily recognized in the states', companies', and individuals' forms of action. Systemic perversity is one of its corollaries.

Within this frame, people feel forsaken, and this incites the adoption of everyday practices that some decades before would have been morally condemned. There is a true regression concerning the notion of public good and of solidarity. The shrinkage of the social and political functions of the state, revealed by the extension of poverty and the growing threats to sovereignty, is emblematic of this regression. At the same time, the political role of companies in the regulation of social life is increasing.

3.2 The Tyranny of Information and Money, and the Present Ideological System

Among the constitutive factors of globalization in its present perverse form are both the way by which information is offered to humanity and the emergence of money in its pure state as a motor of economic and social life. These are two central forms of violence, foundations of the ideological system that justifies hegemonic actions and leads to the empire of fabulations, to fragmented perceptions, and to the single discourse of the world. This discourse is the basis of these new totalitarianisms—in other words, of globalitarianisms—that we are now observing.

3.2.1 The Violence of Information

One of the most noticeable traces of the present historical period is the truly despotic role of information. As we have already mentioned, new technical conditions ought to permit the enlargement of the knowledge of the planet, the objects that form it, the societies that live in it, and humanity in its intrinsic reality. All the same, the techniques of information are principally utilized in the present conditions by a handful of actors in accordance with their particular aims. These techniques of information are appropriated, for the time being, by some states and companies, thus worsening the processes of the creation of inequalities. In this way, the periphery of the capitalist system ends up becoming even more peripheral, whether because this periphery cannot completely possess the new means of production or because the possibility of control escapes from it.

That which is transmitted to the greater part of humanity is, indeed, a manipulated information, one that confuses rather than clarifies. This is even more serious since, in the present conditions of economic and social life, information is an essential and indispensable given. Yet, because what comes to people and also to hegemonized companies and institutions is already the result of a manipulation, such information presents itself as an ideology. The fact that discourse in today's world almost obligatorily precedes a substantial portion of human actions—be they the technique, production, consumption, or power—explains the reason for the generalized presence of the ideological in all these points. It is not strange, then, that reality and ideology are blurred in the common person's appreciation of the world, above all because ideology inserts itself into objects and presents itself as a thing.

We are facing a new 'enchantment of the world' in which discourse and rhetoric are the beginning and the end. This imperative and this omnipresence of information are insidious, given that the current information has two faces, one by which it tries to instruct and another by which it seeks to convince. This is in fact the work of publicity. If today information has these two faces, the one in charge of the convincing is becoming much more current insofar as publicity has been transformed into something that precedes production itself. Fighting for survival and

hegemony out of competitiveness, companies cannot exist without publicity, which has become the nervous system of commerce.

There is a carnal relation between the world of the production of news and the world of production of things and norms. Today, publicity deeply infiltrates all activities. There was once an ethical incompatibility between advertising and performing certain activities, as in the medical or educational profession. But now, everything is being propagated, and politics itself is in large part being subordinated to the rules of publicity.

The various national media outlets are becoming globalized, not only concerning their annoyingness and sameness, but also because of the repetition of the same protagonists. Events are falsified since media do not broadcast the fact itself, but an interpretation of it, that is, the news. In a beautiful text entitled “O retorno do fato” (in *História: Novos problemas*, 1974), Pierre Nora points out that in the village the testimonies of those who convey an occurrence can be collated with the testimony of neighbours. In a complex society such as ours, we are only able to know what has happened on the next street 2 days later, through an interpretation marked by the mood, views, prejudices, and interests of media agencies. The event is already delivered in makeup to the reader, listener, and viewer; it is also because of this that fables and myths are simultaneously produced in today’s world.

3.2.2 *Fables*

One of these fabulations is the oft-repeated idea of the global village (Octávio Ianni, *Teorias da Globalização*, 1996). The fact that communication became possible on the scale of the planet, letting us know instantaneously what is happening everywhere, permitted the coining of this expression. In reality, contrary to what occurs in true villages, it is often easier to communicate with someone far away than with a neighbour. In addition, when this kind of communication occurs, it does so through the intermediation of objects. The information about a fact does not come from the interaction between people, but from what is conveyed by the media, which interpret facts according to specific interests.

The idea of a contracted space and time due to the wonders of velocity may be considered another myth. Nevertheless, velocity can be utilized only by a limited number of persons in such a way that distances have various significations and effects according to the possibilities of each person. Likewise, the use of the same clock does not permit an equal economy of time.

Both the global village and contracted space-time would permit us to imagine the realization of the dream of a single world. Through the hands of the global market, things, relationships, money, and tastes are largely diffused across continents, races, languages, and religions, as if the particularities woven throughout centuries had been frayed. Everything would be oriented and, at the same time, homogenized by the regulatory global market. However, is this market really regulatory? Really global? The fact is that only three centres, New York, London,

and Tokyo, comprise more than half of all the transactions and shares of the global market; transnational companies are responsible for the greater part of so-called global commerce; the 47 less developed countries together represent only 0.3% of global commerce, in place of 2.3% in 1960 (Y. Berthelot, "Globalisation et regionalisation: une mise en perspective", in *L'integration régionale dans le monde*, GEMDEV, 1994), while companies are responsible for 40% of the commerce of the United States (N. Chomsky, *Folha de S. Paulo*, 25th of April, 1993).

There are those who believe in a deterritorialized humanity, one of its characteristics being the collapse of frontiers as an imperative of globalization. In addition to this idea there is another, of which it is a consequence: the existence, today, of an alleged universal citizenship. Although it is true that the significance of frontiers has changed, they have never been so alive insofar as the very exercise of globalized activities cannot exist without a governmental action capable of making them effective within a territory. Deterritorialized humanity is merely a myth. The exercise of citizenship, even if it advances the notion of an international morality, is still a fact that depends on the presence and action of national states.

This world as fable is nourished by other ingredients, amongst them the politicization of statistics, of which a prominent example is the manner of comparing the wealth of nations. In the present conditions, Gross National Product is merely an alias for what could be called, in reality, global product, since the numbers included in this quantification are those related to the operations that characterise globalization itself.

There are also those who affirm that the 'death of the state' would better people's lives and the health of companies, insofar as this would permit the extension of the freedom to produce, to consume, and to live. Such neoliberalism would be the foundation of democracy. Observing the concrete functioning of economic society and civil society, it is not difficult to see that it is a decreasing number of companies that benefit from this swooning of the state, while the inequality between individuals grows.

Without these fables and myths, this current historical period would not exist as it is. The violence of money would also not be possible. Money only becomes violent and tyrannical because it is served by the violence of information, which takes for granted the fact that, at the end of the twentieth century, language is gaining autonomy, constituting its own law. This facilitates the enthronement of an ideological subsystem, without which globalization in its present form could not be explained.

3.2.3 The Violence of Money

The internationalization of financial capital has recently been expanded due to several reasons. In the present historical phase, the mega-firms are obliged to worry themselves with the financial usage of the money they obtain. The great companies go hand in hand, almost mandatorily, with the great financial companies.

Those financial companies related to the multinationals utilize, in large part, the savings of the countries where they are located. When a multinational firm installs itself in a country, say country C or D, the internal savings begin to participate in both the financial work and logic of such a firm. When expatriated, this money is able to regress to the original country as credit or debit, that is, by the intermediation of great global companies. What should have been internal savings is transformed into external savings, on which the recipient countries must pay extortionate interest. What leaves the country as *royalties*, as bought intelligence, payment for services, or profit remittances, comes back as credit and debt. This is the current logic of the internationalization of credit and debt. The acceptance of an economic model in which the payment of external debt is a priority implies the acceptance of the logic of this money.

In the present conditions of the international economy, the financial sector gains a sort of autonomy. That is why the relationship between finances and production, between what is now called real economy and the world of finances, gives way to what Marx called speculative madness, which is founded in the role of money in its pure state. Money becomes the centre of the universe. Money as money alone reproduces its fetishism by way of ideology. The financial system creates imaginative formulae, forever devises new instruments, and multiplies what it calls derivatives, which are constantly renewed forms of offering this merchandise to speculators. As a result, exponential speculation, redefined in this manner, will thus become something indispensable and intrinsic to the system, thanks to the technical advances of our epoch. It is real time that will permit the velocity of operations and the volatility of *assets*. At the same time, finance moves the economy and deforms it, spreading its tentacles over all aspects of life. It is thus appropriate to speak of the tyranny of money.

If money in its pure state has become despotic, this is also due to the fact that everything has become an exchange value. The monetization of everyday life has gained an enormous amount of ground worldwide in the last 25 years. This presence of money everywhere constitutes a threatening given of our everyday existence.

3.2.4 Fragmented Perceptions and the Single Discourse of the 'World'

It is through this generalization and reification of ideology that, on the one hand, fragmented perceptions are multiplied and, on the other, a single discourse of the 'world' can be established. This phenomenon has implications for economic production, for approaches to contemporary history, for mass culture, and for the global market.

The material bases of this mythification are given by the reality of the current technique. The technique presents itself to the ordinary person as both mystery and banality. Indeed, the technique is more accepted than understood. As everything

seems to depend upon it, the technique presents itself as a universal necessity, an unquestionable presence, endowed of an almost divine force which people surrender to without trying to understand. The technique is a common fact of everybody's daily life, hence, a banality. However, its foundations and range escape immediate perception, which explains why it is so mysterious. Such characteristics nourish the imaginary of the technique, founded on its relations with science, in its exigency for rationality, in the absolutism with which it tailors behaviours in the service of the market. All this leads to a belief in the inevitability of the technique.

When the political system formed by governments and companies utilizes the contemporary technical systems and their imaginaries in order to produce the present globalization, it points to relentless forms of economic relationships that present themselves as being unquestionable and requiring blind obedience. The actors who refuse this obedience are thrown off the stage or remain as slaves of a logic that is indispensable to the functioning of the system as a whole.

This is a very intense and insidious form of totalitarianism because it is based on notions that appear to be central to the very idea of democracy, such as tolerance, freedom of opinion, and freedom of the press. These notions are actually employed in suppressing the possibilities of knowledge about the world, countries, and places.

3.3 Competitiveness, Consumption, the Confusion of Spirits, Globalitarianism

In this globalized world, competitiveness, consumption, and the confusion of spirits are bulwarks of the present state of things. Competitiveness dictates our forms of action. Consumption dictates our forms of inaction. Lastly, the confusion of spirits prevents our understanding of the world, the country, the place, the society, and of ourselves.

3.3.1 Competitiveness, the Absence of Compassion

In the last five centuries of the development and geographic expansion of capitalism, competition has been established as a rule. Now, competitiveness is taking the place of competition. The present competitiveness is not like the old competition, particularly because it sweeps away all forms of compassion. Competitiveness takes war as a norm. There is a drive to defeat others at any cost, crushing them in order to take their place. The last years of the twentieth century were emblematic because many concentrations and mergers of companies occurred during this period, both in the field of production and in that of finances and information. This movement indicates at the same time an apex of the capitalist system and its paroxysm, insofar

as the identities of its actors, once only visible to some, now finally appear to everyone.

This warfare taken as a norm justifies any appeal to the use of force, as can be seen in several countries. It is an explicit appeal that is utilized in order to resolve conflicts and which is a consequence of this ethics of competitiveness that characterizes our time. However, this state of war also justifies impetuous and possessive individualisms: individualisms in economic life (the manner in which companies fight amongst themselves), individualisms in the political order (the manner in which parties tend to give up the idea of politics in favour of an approach of mere electioneering), and individualisms at the level of the territory (cities bickering amongst themselves and regions advocating particularistic solutions). Equally impetuous and possessive are the individualisms present in the social and individual order, individualisms which lead to the constitution of the other as a thing. Behaviours that justify all varieties of disrespect toward other people are, after all, a basis of the present sociability. Moreover, the manner by which the Brazilian middle classes were constituted reinforces the logic of instruments instead of the logic of finalities, while allowing pragmatism to emerge triumphant.

Another explanation for the aforementioned situations is the declining influence of philosophy in the formulation of the social sciences. When seeking interdisciplinarity, the social sciences tend to reduce their search to drawing inspiration only from the economic sciences. All of this led to the impoverishment of the human sciences and, consequently, to a difficulty in comprehending what is occurring in the world. This is the case insofar as the economic sciences are increasingly becoming a field that is concerned merely with the administration of things in the service of an ideological system. In this manner, new conceptions are implanted in the values attributed to each object, each individual, each relationship, and each place, thus legitimizing new modalities, new rules of production and consumption, and new forms of finance and national accounting. The latter, indeed, is reduced into a mere alias of an allegedly global accounting, something that does not, in fact, exist, but is nevertheless taken for granted. This global accounting is one of the foundations of the ideological subsystem that commands other subsystems of social life, forming a constellation that orients both the production of the economy and the production of life. This new law of value—one that is, in fact, an ideological law of value—is a beloved daughter of competitiveness and, in the end, is responsible for the neglect of the notion and the practice of solidarity. All of this explains the resulting fragmentations, the upsurge of unemployment, the neglect of education, the contempt for healthcare as an inalienable social and individual right, and all the perverse forms of sociability that already exist or are being prepared in our country. These perverse forms are responsible for introducing even more fragmentation into this country, the various parcels of which will be thrown against one another in a battle with no quarter, driven by the immediate need for survival.

3.3.2 *Consumption and Its Despotisms*

Consumption, too, changes its shape throughout time. Previously, it was common to talk of the autonomy of production in the sense that a company, when it ensured the saleability of a product, also sought to manipulate opinions by way of publicity. In this case, the fact generator of consumption was production itself. Today, though, hegemonic companies produce the consumer even before producing its products. In this manner, an essential fact in understanding consumption is that the production of the consumer today precedes the production of goods and services. Thus, in the causal chain, the so-called autonomy of production gives way to the despotism of consumption; hence, the empire of information and publicity. Such a remedy would be made up of 1% medicine and 99% publicity, but everything related to the market ends up having this composition: publicity + materiality; publicity + services. This is the case of so much merchandise whose circulation is founded on an insistent and frequently deceptive propaganda. There is, then, an organization of consumption that precedes the organization of production.

Such operations can become simultaneous in relation to clock time but, from the point of view of logic, the production of information and publicity comes first. In this manner, we live surrounded on all sides by this ideological system situated around a likewise ideologized consumption and information. In the end, this ideologized consumption and information are the motor of public and private actions. This pair is at the same time extremely strong and fragile. On one hand, it is strong due to its essential influence over production and consumption. On the other, it can be considered weak or feeble when seen as a fraction of a broader system. Consumption is the great emollient that creates and encourages stasis. By way of the aesthetic, moral, and social stimuli it provides, consumption is also a vehicle of narcissism. Since consumption reaches and involves everyone, it appears as the great fundamentalism of our time. This is why an understanding of the nature of the world relies on the recognition of the role of consumption and competitiveness, both of which are founded upon the same ideological system.

Consumerism and competitiveness lead to a moral and intellectual emaciation of the person and to the destitution of the personality and the view of the world in-depth, eliding the fundamental opposition between the figure of the consumer and that of the citizen. This opposition is certainly less perceived in Brazil, since the figure of the citizen never emerged in our country. The so-called upper classes, including the middle classes, never wanted to be known as citizens, while poor never could. The middle classes were conditioned to desire only privileges and not rights. This fact is essential to the understanding of Brazil, of how political parties are organized and function, of how politics is carried out, of how society moves. Intellectuals also bear responsibility in such a case since, without further imagination and originality, they translated the condition of the European middle class and its fight for the expansion of political, economic and social rights to the

Brazilian case. Thus, they wrongly attributed a role of modernization and progress to the Brazilian middle class, one that this class, by its very constitution, could never assume.

3.3.3 Totalitarian Information and the Confusion of Spirits

All this is due in large part to the fact that the end of the twentieth century erected the despotism of information as the central given of its functioning. In a certain way, this despotism is related to the level of development of the present technique so in need of a supporting discourse. Since all the hegemonic activities are today founded on this technique, discourse appears as something fundamental to everyone's existence. This absolute need for a discourse that precedes everything—beginning with the technique itself, production, consumption, and power—opens the doors for ideology.

It was once in vogue to discuss the opposition between what was real and what was not; between the mistake and accuracy; the mistake and the truth; essence and appearance. Perhaps today this discussion has no logic, as ideology has become real and present as reality, above all by means of objects. Objects are things, are real. They present themselves in front of us not as a discourse alone, but as an ideological discourse that conscripts us, against our will, toward a certain form of behaviour. This empire of objects has a pertinent role in the production of this new shrunken humanity, a condition to which we all risk succumbing. Until the Second World War, we had a certain amount of objects around us that we were able to command. Today, half a century later, what we have around us is a multitude of objects, all or most of which want to command us. One of the most significant differences between the world of 50 years ago and the world of today is this commanding role that has been attributed to objects, objects that carry an ideology bestowed upon them by the people of marketing and design in the service of the market.

3.3.4 From Imperialism to the World of Today

Although competitive capitalism attempted to unify the planet, it obtained only a relative unification that was boosted under monopolistic capitalism as a result of the technical advances of the last two centuries. This process permitted a transition to the present situation of neoliberalism. In a certain way, it is now possible to speak of a will for total unification underpinned by the tyranny of money and information. This tyranny produces situations all across the globe where everything—that is, people, ideas, behaviours, relationships, places—is affected.

In each one of these moments, the relationships between individuals and society, between the market and solidarity, are different. Until recently, there was a search

for a relative mutual reinforcement of ideas and the reality of individual autonomy (with an interest in producing strong individuals and citizens) and of the idea and reality of a solidary society (with the state increasingly committed to exercising distributive regulations). These situations unfold differently according to continents and countries, and if the aforementioned situation did not constitute a complete reality, it was at least a generalized aspiration.

Throughout the history of capitalism, and in parallel with the evolution of techniques, moral and philosophical ideas became widespread, as did their political and juridical realizations. In this manner, behaviours, laws, regulations, and juridical and state institutions sought to exercise greater social control and, at the same time, greater control over individual actions. This control limited the action of those vectors which, if left alone, would lead to the outbreak of selfishness, to the exercise of brutal force, and to increasingly severe social disparities.

In the current stage of globalization, the use of techniques is experiencing an important qualitative and quantitative change. We are passing from an 'imperialist' usage, which also entailed an uneven and combined usage according to continents and places, to an obligatory presence of the hegemonic technical system in all countries. This ubiquitous presence of the hegemonic technical system is only possible due to the unifying role of information techniques.

By way of politics, the imperialist use of techniques permitted a certain coexistence of different levels of technical and organizational forms in the various empires. Such a situation remained for nearly a century without the differences of power amongst the empires leading to lasting conflicts between or within themselves. Imperialism itself was 'differential', a characteristic that was a consequence of the subordination of the market to politics, be it international politics or a politics internal to each country or imperial bloc. With globalization, techniques become more effective and their presence becomes blurred with that of the ecumene. The practically spontaneous linkage between techniques is reinforced; at the same time, their use escapes the domain of politics in many aspects and becomes subordinated to the market.

3.3.5 Globalitarianisms and Totalitarianisms

As all of the present hegemonic techniques are the offspring of science, and as their utilization occurs in the service of the market, this amalgam produces an ideology of the technique and the market that is sanctified by a science that is itself considered infallible. This is, indeed, one of the sources of the power of the single thought. Everything that is made by the hands of the fundamental vectors of globalization comes from scientific ideas that are indispensable to the accelerated production of new realities. As a consequence, the actions created in this manner impose themselves as the only possible solutions.

In the present conditions, ideology is reinforced in a manner that would have been impossible a quarter of century ago, since ideas, and above all, ideologies, are

transformed into situations, while situations become 'ideas' in themselves, 'ideas of what to do', 'ideologies'. In exchange, these ideologies impregnate science. This science that sanctifies ideologies and legitimates actions is becoming increasingly reductive and reduced, and thus more distant from the search for truth. Other conditions of contemporary life are also derived from this ensemble of variables. They include the mathematicization of existence, an increasing seduction by numbers, and a magical use of statistics.

It is also in this frame that one can interpret the serialization discussed by J.-P. Sartre in *Questions de Méthode, Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, 1960. In such conditions we see the installation of competitiveness, the everyone-for-oneself attitude, the return to cannibalism, and the suppression of solidarity, leading to an accumulation of difficulties for a healthy social conviviality and for the exercise of democracy. While democracy is reduced to a mere democracy of the market and to electoralism, in other words, to a consumption of elections, 'polls' are elevated to the status of quantitative inspectors of opinion. At the same time, these polls not only measure opinions, but form new ones. All of these factors result in the impoverishment of the debate of ideas and even to the death of politics. In the context of sociability, utilitarianisms emerge as norms of life by the exacerbation of consumption, narcissism, impetuosity, selfishness, and the abandonment of solidarity, and with the galloping implantation of an individualist ethics of life. This is how society and individuals bring themselves to bid farewell to generosity, solidarity, and emotion, with the concretization of the realm of calculus (through economic calculus) and competitiveness.

These are the conditions of diffusion of a totalitarian thought and practice. These totalitarianisms are present in the sphere of labour. An example of this can be seen in the world of modernized agriculture, where subaltern actors live subjected to a sort of military discipline similar to that of an army. However, totalitarianism is not exclusive to the sphere of labour. It flows into the spheres of politics and interpersonal relationships and invades the world of academic research and teaching by a less and less disguised repression of ideas. In face of this new reality, it is logical to question the pertinence of the present utilization of already-outdated conceptions like democracy, public opinion, and citizenship. These concepts need urgent revision, above all in places where these categories were never clearly defined or totally exercised.

Our great task today is the elaboration of a new discourse capable of demystifying competitiveness and consumption, and of attenuating, if not dismantling, the confusion of spirits.

3.4 Structural Violence and Systemic Perversity

Today, violence is an insistent subject, normally understood almost as a state of being, a situation that is characteristic of our time. However, the greatest part of the forms of violence we are speaking about is made up of derived forms of violence,

while attention is turned less to what we prefer to call structural violence. This structural variety is the basis of the production of other forms and constitutes the original central violence. This is why we in fact end up condemning only particular peripheral forms of violence.

As it appears to us, structural violence is a result of the presence and joint manifestation, in this era of globalization, of three factors: money in its pure state, competitiveness in its pure state, and power in its pure state. The association of these three factors leads to the emergence of new forms of totalitarianism and justifies the thought that we now live, indeed, in an epoch not merely of globalization, but of globalitarianism. Moreover, we are moving from a situation where perversity manifests itself in an isolated form to another in which it is installed as a system of perversities. This system is at the same time a result and a cause of the legitimation of money, competitiveness, and power¹ in their pure states, thus consecrating the end of ethics and of politics.

3.4.1 *Money in Its Pure State*

Globalization brings about the imposition of new notions of wealth, prosperity, and macroeconomic equilibrium, concepts founded on money in its pure state and to which all national economies are forced to adapt. The notion, and also the reality, of an international debt derives from this same ideology. Consumption, which became a common denominator of all individuals, attributes, in all its different manifestations, a central role to money. Together, money and consumption present themselves as regulators of individual life. Thus, the new money becomes omnipresent. Founded on an ideology, this money without measure becomes the general measure, reinforcing the tendency to consider accumulation as a goal in itself. In reality, the results of this search for money can be both accumulation (for some) and indebtedness (for the majority). In these conditions, a vicious circle is established in which fear and abandonment are created mutually and the rampant search for money is at the same time the cause and consequence of that abandonment and fear.

The objective result of these conditions is the necessity, real or imaginary, to seek more money. As money in its pure state is indispensable to the existence of people, companies, and nations, the forms by which it is acquired, whatever they may be, find themselves justified in advance.

¹T.N.: Santos here writes *potência* rather than *poder*. Since English lacks a satisfactory equivalent to these two terms, we have chosen to translate both as 'power'. This is a common problem in translations from Romance languages into English, and particularly for translators of writers like Spinoza, for whom these distinctions are conceptually important (cf. the preface to Michael Hardt's translation of Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly* (1991)).

3.4.2 *Competitiveness in Its Pure State*

The need for capitalization leads to the adoption, as a rule, of the necessity for competition on all planes. It is said that the nations need to compete between themselves—though this is doubtful—and, certainly, companies compete for larger and larger slices of the market. However, the stability of a company may depend on just a slight action of the market; its survival hangs by a thread. In a globalized world, regions and cities are pushed to compete with one another and, given the present rules of production and the imperatives of consumption, competitiveness becomes a rule, too, of coexistence between people. Indeed, the necessity of competition is legitimated by a largely accepted and widespread ideology, insofar as disobedience to its norms implies the decline of one's position within the economic scenario, or even one's disappearance from it. Thus, new 'values' are created across diverse contexts, leading to a new and pervasive 'ethics' that is also of operational importance to the mechanisms of globalization.

To enter into contention and to enter into competition² are different things. In fact, contention may even be considered something healthy if the battle between agents for performing tasks in order to obtain better results requires one to respect rules of coexistence, pre-established or otherwise. On the other hand, competitiveness is founded on the invention of new weapons in a situation where the only rule is the conquest of the best position. Competitiveness is a species of war that amounts to a free-for-all. In this way, its practice provokes a relaxation of moral values and an invitation to the exercise of violence.

3.4.3 *Power in Its Pure State*

In order for one to exercise competitiveness in its pure state and to obtain money in its pure state, power³ must also be exercised in its pure state. In the end, the use of force becomes a necessity. There is no other *telos*, no other finality than the use of force, since it is indispensable to competition and to the maximization of profits. This is accompanied by the neglect of the other, the neighbourhood, and of humanity in general.

The idea that unemployment, for example, is the result of a simplistic game between technical forms and the microeconomic decisions of companies is a

²T.N.: In Portuguese, Santos writes that '*Concorrer e competir não são a mesma coisa*'. In English, both *concorrer* and *competir* are normally translated as 'to compete'. However, in the way Santos utilizes them, *concorrer* would imply a beneficial competition, while *competir* could be understood as a competition undertaken at all costs. With this in mind, we have translated *concorrer* as 'contention'.

³T.N.: In the Portuguese, Santos writes 'o poder (potência) deve ser também exercido em estado puro', with one term bracketed as an appositive of the other. This reinforces our decision, as per our previous note on the *poder/potência* distinction, to render both terms as 'power'.

reduction that originates in this confusion, as if the nation were not obligated to show solidarity with each of its members. The renunciation of the idea of solidarity is behind this understanding of the economy and is responsible for the hopelessness in which we live today. In all of history, there has never before been a period in which fear was so generalized and all-reaching: fear of unemployment, fear of starvation, fear of violence, fear of the other. Such fear spreads and deepens through a diffuse, yet structural, violence that is typical of our time. Understanding this fear is indispensable to a more adequate comprehension of issues like social debt and functional violence, so present in the everyday life of all people.

3.4.4 *Systemic Perversity*

From whichever angle we choose to analyze the typical situations of the current period, reality can be seen as a fabric of perversities. Starvation is no longer an isolated or occasional fact, but has become a generalized and permanent given. It strikes 800 million people across all continents. In a period when the progress of medicine and information should lead to a substantive reduction of health problems, it is well known that 14 thousand people under the age of five die every year.⁴

Two million people live day to day without safe drinking water. Never before in history was there such a large number of displaced people and refugees. The phenomenon of homelessness, no more than a curiosity in the first half of the twentieth century, is today a banality present in every large city of the world. Unemployment has become commonplace. At the same time, it has become more difficult now than before to promote high quality education and even to eliminate illiteracy. Poverty is also increasing. At the end of the twentieth century there were 600 million more poor people than in 1960. Today, 1.4 billion people earn less than a dollar per day. In reality, such numbers may be even worse since, even here, the quantitative methods of statistics are deceptive: being poor does not only mean earning less than an arbitrarily determined sum; being poor means being part of a structural situation with a relative position that is inferior within society as a whole. Moreover, this condition is expanding and affecting more and more people. The fact is, though, that poverty, and likewise unemployment, are now considered 'natural', inherent to the process. In addition to unemployment and absolute poverty, we must add the relative impoverishment of an increasing number of people due to the deterioration of the value of labour. In Mexico, the contribution of labour to national revenue dropped from 36% in the 1970s to 23% in 1992. Furthermore, we live in a world of exclusion that is aggravated by the lack of social protection. This

⁴T.N.: The original text indicates 14 million child deaths per day, which appears to be a typographical error on Santos's part. We have taken the liberty of replacing the word day for year, which is likelier to have been Santos's intent.

lack of protection is a prerogative of the neoliberal model, the very same model that is the producer of insecurity.

In reality, perversity no longer manifests itself in isolated facts attributed to distortions of reality, but is now established as a system. As we see it, the essential cause of systemic perversity is the institution of competitiveness as an absolute rule, a competitiveness that spills over the entire social edifice. The *other*, be it a company, an institution or an individual, appears as an obstacle to the realization of the goals of certain actors. In light of this, the other must be removed, thus coming to be considered as a thing. Consequently, we are now experiencing the celebration of selfishness, the spread of narcissism, and the vulgarization of the war of all against all. In this war, it does not really matter the medium put in place to achieve the foreseen goal, which is to compete, and, if possible, to win. Another consequence of this process is the equally generalized diffusion of corruption, another sub-product of competitiveness.

This system of perversities includes the death of Politics (with a capital P), since the management of the political process has become an attribute of large companies. Added to this is the process of conformation of public opinion by the media, an important given of the movement of alienation. This movement is brought along with the substitution of the civilizing debate by the unified discourse of the market. This explains the current process of teaching and learning behaviours that do not contain finalistic and ethical objectives.

Elaborated in this way, the system of perversities legitimates the pre-eminence of a hegemonic action, though without responsibility, and the installation, with no counterpart, of an entropic order, with the ‘natural’ production of disorder.

The establishment of the empire of consumption contributes to all of what we have elaborated here. Installed within this empire is a class of pluperfect⁵ consumers (M. Santos, *O espaço do cidadão*, 1988), a class that is negligent in relation to the concerns of citizenship and its corollary, which is to say, the contempt of liberty, whose cult is replaced by a preoccupation with safety. This process rekindles selfishness and is one of the ferments of the breakdown of solidarity between people, classes and regions. We must add the enlargement of all varieties of inequality to this list of characteristic processes of the system of perversity: interpersonal, class, regional, international inequalities, and so on. Ancient inequalities are now followed by new ones.

The dominant roles of the current period, those legitimated by ideology and the practice of competitiveness, are: the untruth, hidden under the name of the secret or trademark; the lure, given the name of *marketing*⁶; and dissimulation and cynicism,

⁵T.N.: In this passage the author plays on the phrase *mais-que-perfeito*, which is the Portuguese name for the pluperfect verb tense. *Mais-que-perfeito* literally means ‘more than perfect’; hence, the irony.

⁶T.N.: Santos uses this term in English. We have elected to keep his italicization to convey something of the implicit emphasis of the original text.

known as tactics and strategy. This is a situation in which cleverness is glorified in opposition to sincerity and avarice is exalted in opposition to generosity. Consequently, the path to the neglect of solidarity, ethics, and politics is an unobstructed one. With the triumph of the new pragmatic virtues, the ideal of full democracy is replaced by the construction of a democracy of the market in which the distribution of power is tributary to the achievement of the final goals of the globalitarian system. These are the reasons why everyday normal life is subject to a structural violence, one that is, indeed, mother to all other forms of violence.

3.5 From the Politics of States to the Politics of Companies

Let us return for a brief moment to the beginning of human history, when humankind in society, dealing directly with nature, constructed history. At this beginning of time, the ties between territory, politics, economy, culture, and language were transparent. In the societies that European and North American anthropologists proudly called primitive, the relations between sectors of social life occurred practically without intermediation.

At that moment, a genuine territoriality can be considered to have existed. Economy and culture depended on the territory; likewise, language was an emanation of the use of the territory by the economy and culture. Moreover, politics were also intimately related to the territory.

Consequently, there was an absolute territoriality in the sense that, in all the essential manifestations of their existence, residents belonged to that which belonged to them, that is, the territory. This created a sense of identity between people and their geographic space, and attributed to them, in function of the production necessary for the survival of the group, a particular notion of limits. This notion led, in parallel, to a compartmentation of space, which produced an idea of dominion. In order to maintain identity and limits, it was necessary to have a clear idea of dominion, of power. The politics of the territory had the same foundations as the politics of economy, culture, language, and so on, forming an inseparable ensemble. The idea of community, a limited context in space, emerges at the same time.

3.5.1 Technical Systems, Philosophical Systems

Every relation of humanity with nature is a carrier and producer of techniques. These techniques continuously developed, diversified and increased themselves over time. In the last centuries, we witnessed a continuous advance of technical systems that concluded with the rise of techniques of the machine in the eighteenth

century. Later, these techniques would be incorporated into the ground as prostheses,⁷ requiring less effort from humankind in terms of production, transportation, and communications. These prostheses changed the face of the Earth and altered relationships between countries and between individuals and societies. Techniques thus offer responses to humankind's will for evolution and, defined by the possibilities that they create, are the mark of each period of history.

Life thus realized by way of techniques, then, is less and less subordinated to randomness. Indeed, it increasingly requires that humankind act predictably. This predictability of behaviour assures, somehow, a more rational vision of the world and of places, and leads to a sociotechnical organization of labour, of the territory, and of the phenomenon of power. All this considered, we see the emergence of a progressive disenchantment of the world.

Two extremely important phenomena occurred during the eighteenth century. One is the production of techniques of the machine, which revalued labour and capital, attributed new values to territories, permitted the conquest of new spaces, and opened new horizons for humanity. This century marked both the reinforcement of capitalism and humanity's entry onto the scene as a value to be considered. The birth of techniques of the machine, the reinforcement of the technical condition in social and individual life, and new conceptions of humanity embodied the philosophical ideas that would later become political forces. This is another important phenomenon.

The eighteenth century produced the Encyclopedists, the American revolution and the French Revolution,⁸ all three of them responses to philosophical ideas. If, at a moment when capitalism was being reinforced, techniques had been delivered entirely to capitalistic forces and if, on the other hand, there had been no rise of philosophical ideas (which were also moral ideas), the world would have been organized into a different form.

If there were no progression of ideas in addition to these technical developments in the service of production, we would have had a much larger outbreak of utilitarianism, with a more sweeping practice of profiteering and competition. On the contrary, the moral enrichment of the individual became possible. The same ethics glorified the responsible individual and the responsible collective. Both were responsible. The individual and the collective were called together to create a reciprocal enrichment that would point to the search for democracy, by the intermediation of the national and social state and the rule of law, and for the production of a full citizenship, a claim that has been affirmed throughout these centuries. Certainly, this citizenship was never fulfilled, but nearly reached this stage in

⁷T.N.: Santos often utilizes the metaphor of 'prosthesis' for the different human works such as roads, bridges, plantations, buildings, and cities. In the case of the individual, after a certain amount of time is spent using a prosthesis, it is difficult to tell what is part of the body and what is an artificial addition. The same happens to the territory. For Santos's other usages of this metaphor, see M. Santos, *A Natureza do Espaço*, 1996.

⁸T.N.: Note here the distinction between the lower-case American revolution and the upper-case French Revolution, which could be interpreted as a privileging of the latter over the former.

certain countries during the so-called thirty glorious years⁹ after the end of the Second World War. This near-fullness was parallel to the near-fullness of democracy. Full citizenship is a dam against the torrent of full capital.

3.5.2 *Technoscience, Globalization, and Senseless History*

Globalization marks a rupture in this process of social and moral evolution that had been occurring in the preceding centuries. It is ironic to recall that, since the previous centuries, technical progress appeared as a condition of the realization of this dreamed-of globalization, along with the more complete humanization of life on the planet. Contradictorily, when this technical progress reached a superior level, globalization established itself, but not for the service of humanity.

Globalization kills the notion of solidarity, devolves humanity to the primitive condition of everyone for oneself. It reduces the notions of public and particular morality to a near nothing, as if we have returned to being animals of the jungle.

The marriage between science and technique, this technoscience whose use is conditioned by the market, forms one of the foundations of the current period. As a consequence, science and technique become selective. As science frequently comes to produce that which is of interest to the market, and not to humanity at large, technical and scientific progress is not always a moral progress. Perhaps worse than that is the fact that the absence of this moral progress, as well as all that is done through this absence, is going to weigh heavily on the model of historical construction now dominant in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

This globalization must be seen through two parallel processes. On the one hand, there is the production of materiality, or, in other words, of the material conditions that surround us and which are the foundations of economic production, transportation, and communications. On the other, there is a production of new social relationships between countries, classes, and people. The new situation, as we have already emphasized, is underpinned by two central pillars. One is founded on money and the other on information. Within each country, and particularly between the poorest, globalized information and globalized money impose themselves as something autonomous in the face of society and even the economy. These two pillars become a fundamental element of production and, at the same time, of geopolitics, which is to say, the relations between countries and the internal relations of each nation.

Information is centralized in the hands of a very limited number of firms. Today, the bulk of what the world reads, both in newspapers and in books, is produced through a handful of companies that do not, in reality, transmit anything new, but rewrite the news according to a specific angle. Although the technical conditions of

⁹T.N.: Although this phrase is typically written in capital letters as a proper noun, we follow Santos in rendering it in the lower case.

information allow all of humanity to know the entirety of the world, in reality we end up not knowing it because of this deforming intermediation.

The world then becomes fluid, thanks not only to information, but also to money. All of the contexts intrude and overlap, embodying a global context in which frontiers become porous to money and to information. Beyond this, the territory no longer has rigid frontiers, leading to a weakening and change in the nature of the national state.

The discourse that we hear every day, the one that intends to make us believe that the state should be less prominent, makes use of this aforementioned porosity. However, the essential foundation of such a discourse is the fact that the driving forces of globalization demand a type of state that is flexible to their interests. The process of privatization shows that capitalism became devouring, greedy to the extreme, forever demanding more and wanting everything. Beyond this, the installation of these varieties of globalized capital supposes the adaptation of the territory to the necessities of the fluidity of such capital, an adaptation carried out by heavy investments in order to alter the geography of the selected regions. In this manner, the state ends up having fewer resources to invest in all that is social. This is particularly true in the case of the caricatured privatizations of the Brazilian model, which finances foreign candidate companies in their purchases of national social capital. It is not that the state is absent or becoming smaller, it is merely that it has become omni-verse concerning the general interests of the people, emerging as a stronger, more agile, more present force in the service of the dominant economy.

3.5.3 Global Companies and the Death of Politics

Today's politics is made in the market. However, this global market does not exist as an actor, but as an ideology, a symbol. The actors now are global companies, which have neither ethical nor finalistic preoccupations. Some may say that in the world of competitiveness, there are only two options: to become increasingly individualistic, or to disappear. So, the very logic of survival of the global company suggests that it ought to function without altruism. However, if the state cannot be solidary and the company cannot be altruistic, society as a whole has nobody to care for it. Today we often speak of a third sector in which private companies would assume a role of social assistance once deferred to public power. They would then be in charge of choosing the beneficiaries of such assistance, privileging a portion of society and leaving the greater part in the cold. Fractions of the territory and society, provided that they were not profitable to the firms, would be left to their own devices. This 'politics' of the companies is equivalent to the enactment of the death of Politics.

Politics, by definition, is always broad, and should assume a comprehensive view. It is only completely accomplished when everyone and everything is considered. One who has no vision of the big picture cannot quite be considered a

politician. In addition, there is not merely a politics of the poor, just as there is not merely a politics of the rich. Thus, the elimination of poverty is a structural issue. Outside of this, the intention is limited to protecting only certain poor and certain rich chosen according to the interests of donors. Nevertheless, politics has to care for the ensemble of realities and the ensemble of relations.

In the present conditions, and in a general way, what we are seeing is a non-politics, that is, a politics pursued by companies, especially the major ones. When a great company establishes itself, it brings its norms with it, almost all of which are extremely rigid. As these rigid norms are associated with the use considered appropriate to the corresponding techniques, the world of norms deepens because the techniques themselves are also norms. Due to the fact that there is a solidarity between the present techniques, when one technique imposes itself, it creates the need to bring along others. Without the support of these other techniques, the first imposed will not function well. Each technique proposes a particular manner of behaviour, contains its own regulations and, consequently, brings new forms of relationship to the places where they are installed. The same can be said of companies. This is also how social relations within each community are modified. The employment structure changes, as do the other economic, social, cultural, and moral relations within each place, and this also affects the public budget, under both the headings of revenue and expenditure. The installation of a small number of companies, provided that they are large, is enough to bring about a cumbersome process of disequilibrium for society as a whole.

However, through the official discourse, such companies are presented as saviours of the places and are considered worthy of recognition due to their contributions to employment and to modernity. This explains the present belief in their indispensability, which is a factor of the present war between places¹⁰ and, in many cases, a factor of their habit of blackmailing public power, threatening to withdraw from a location if their claims go unanswered. Thus, public power comes to be subordinated, bound, and dragged. Insofar as this logic of great companies is imposed, it sows the seed of ingovernability, already deeply implanted in Brazil, although its influence has not been adequately evaluated. Insofar as the institutions responsible for the general interest are weakened, with the abandonment of the idea of solidarity and of the practice of solidarity, we are producing, at least in the medium term, the preconditions of fragmentation and disorder. This situation is clear in the behaviour of the Brazilian territory, that is, in the almost generalized crisis of the states¹¹ and municipalities.

¹⁰T.N.: The war between places (*guerra dos lugares* in Portuguese) is a concept of Santos's that makes reference to the competition between places, cities, and regions for investments from companies. It is related to those who offer the most attractive fiscal and infra-structural incentives in order to convince companies to install plants in their territories.

¹¹T.N.: 'States' here refers to the Brazilian governmental subdivisions. Rather than departments or provinces, Brazil is subdivided in 26 states, plus the Federal District.

3.6 Over 5 Decades, Three Definitions of Poverty

In the last half of the century, under-developed countries knew at least three forms of poverty, which were at the same time attended by three forms of social debt. The first is what we boldly call *included poverty*, an accidental poverty that is at times residual or seasonal, being produced only at certain times of the year. This is an interstitial poverty that lacks, above all, communicating vessels, in other words, a system of poverty that occurs in discrete locations but of which there is no significant relation between its parts.

Thereafter, another form of poverty arises, recognized and studied as a disease of civilization. Then called *marginality*, such poverty was produced by the economic process of the division of labour, whether international or internal. It was assumed that marginality could be corrected, and such a correction was sought out by the hands of governments.

We now arrive at the third type, *structural poverty*, which, from a moral and political point of view, is equivalent to a social debt. It is structural and no longer local, nor even national, but becomes globalized and present throughout the world. There is a planet-wide dissemination and a globalized production of poverty, although it is more strongly present in those countries that are already poor. However, structural poverty is also a scientific production, and therefore a willing participant in the social debt for which solutions are not sought throughout the greater part of the planet.

3.6.1 ‘Included’ Poverty

Previously, instances of poverty could be defined as indicators of an accidental, residual, seasonal, and interstitial poverty, seen as a local failure to adapt to more general processes of change, or as unsuitability between natural conditions and social ones. It was a poverty that was produced in one particular place and which had no communication with another.

So, neither the city, the territory, nor society itself were exclusively or in large part moved by *driving forces*¹² encompassed by the process of rationalization. The existence of techniques, glued to the territory or inherent to social life, was relatively unimportant, thus reducing the efficacy of the rationalizing processes that may have been present in economic, cultural, social, and political life. This way, the rationality of existence did not constitute an essential given of the historical process and limited itself to some isolated aspects of sociability. The production of poverty would seek its causes in other factors.

¹²T.N.: This term, too, appears in English in Santos’s source text. We have maintained his use of italics to convey emphasis.

In the situation that we are describing, the solutions to the problem were private, welfare-oriented, and local, and poverty was frequently presented as a natural or social accident. In a world where consumption was not yet widespread and in which money still did not constitute an obligatory social nexus, poverty was less discriminatory; hence, we can speak of an included poverty.

3.6.2 Marginality

In the second instant, poverty was identified as a disease of civilization, the production of which accompanied the economic process itself. Consumption thus appeared as a crucial given due to its importance to the explanation of inequalities and the understanding of situations. Two factors played a fundamental role in this situation. On the one hand, the possibilities of circulation were expanded, and on the other, thanks to the modern forms by which innovations were diffused, information constituted a revolutionary given in social relations. The radio transistor was the great example of this. The expansion of consumption thus gained the necessary material and psychological conditions for its existence, giving new contents and new definitions to poverty. Beyond absolute poverty, a relative poverty was incessantly created and recreated, which led to the classification of individuals by their capacity to consume and by the manner in which they did so. The establishment of 'indices' of poverty and misery made use of these components.

Yet in this second instant, which coincided with the generalization and success of the idea of underdevelopment and with the theories that were destined to combat it, the poor were termed marginal. In order to overcome such a situation that was broadly considered to be undesirable, the preoccupation of governments and national societies with the phenomenon of poverty became equally generalized by way of their political and intellectual elites. This preoccupation led to a search for state solutions to the problem of poverty, which was considered grave, but not unsolvable. The success of the welfare state in so many countries of Western Europe and the news of the socialist countries' care for their populations in general functioned as an inspiration for poor countries. All of these countries were committed, at least ideologically, to the fight against poverty and its manifestations, even if it was not possible for them to achieve the realization of the welfare state themselves. Even in countries like Brazil, public power was forced to find formulas and solutions, or at least patchwork solutions. There was a certain shame in our country in not confronting the question.

3.6.3 Globalized Structural Poverty

The current period in which we find ourselves reveals a new type of poverty, a globalized structural poverty, resulting from a system of deliberate action. There is

a process by which unemployment is generated and the remuneration of employment worsens, which occurs at the same time that public power withdraws from the duties of social protection. Examining this process, we may consider that the current 'administrative' division of labour and the deliberate absence of the state from its social mission of regulation are contributing to the production of a scientific, globalized, and intentional poverty. Now, contrary of the previous two phases, we are dealing with a poverty that is pervasive, generalized, permanent, and global. In a manner of speaking, one can admit the existence of something like a central planning of the current poverty: although its actors are many, its essential motor is the same as the other defining processes of our age.

The present poverty results from the convergence of causes that take place on several levels, serving as communicating vessels and as something rational, a necessary result of the present process, an inevitable phenomenon, even considered a natural fact.

We have thus reached a sort of naturalization of poverty. This naturalization is politically produced by global actors with the conscious collaboration of national governments. Contrary to the preceding situations, this situation depends on the connivance of contracted—or merely contacted—intellectuals in order to legitimize this naturalization.

In this last phase, the poor are neither included nor marginal; they are excluded. Until recently, the division of labour was something more or less spontaneous. No longer. Today, it obeys the canons of science. For this reason we consider it a cautiously administered division of labour, one which is moved by a mechanism that brings with it the production of social debts and the dissemination of poverty on a global scale. We have left one poverty to enter into another. Even if one escapes poverty in one place, one falls into it in another. In the present conditions, it is a poverty seemingly without remedy, brought about not only by the extension of unemployment, but also by the reduction of the value of labour. Such is the case, for example, of the United States, which is presented as the country that would have best resolved the question of unemployment, but where the average value of salaries has fallen. Furthermore, this fall in unemployment does not effect all of the population equally. The black population, for example, continues to be unemployed, perhaps worse than before, while those of Latin origin find themselves constituting the basis of the wage scale.

This massive production of poverty manifests itself as a banal phenomenon. One of the largest differences from an ethical point of view is that today's poverty arises, imposes, and explains itself as something natural and inevitable. However, it is a poverty that is politically produced by global companies and institutions. On the one hand, they finance localized, segmented, and partial solutions. Such is the case of the World Bank, which funds programs designed to tend to the poor in different parts of the world. Despite wanting to give the impression of being interested in the disadvantaged, the World Bank, structurally speaking, is truly the great producer of poverty. Such institutions paradoxically intend to attack visible manifestations of poverty while creating world scale poverty at the structural level. This process occurs with the passive or active collaboration of national governments.

We must note the difference, then, between the use of the word poverty and of the expression social debt over the course of the past 50 years. The poor, that is, those who are the object of social debt, have already been *included*, then *marginalized*, and in the end they turn out to be what they are today, that is, *excluded*. This current exclusion, with the production of social debts, obeys a rational process, a rationality without reason that nevertheless commands hegemonic actions and carries its influence to other actions. The excluded are the fruits of this rationality. Thus, it can be presumed that the essential question is the understanding of our time, without which it will be impossible to construct the discourse of liberation. This discourse, provided it is both simple and truthful, will be able to serve as the intellectual basis for politics. This is central to today's world, a world in which nothing of importance is done without discourse.

3.6.4 *The Role of Intellectuals*

The terrible thing is that in today's world we see the number of literate people increasing as the number of intellectuals declines. Is this not one of the present dramas of Brazilian society? Such literate people, mistakenly assimilated into the ranks of the intellectuals, either do not think to seek out the truth or, encountering the truth, say nothing. In this case, they are unable to act with the future in mind and so deny the principal function of the intelligentsia, that is, a permanent marriage to what is yet to come by way of a tireless search for truth.

Thus, as today's territory is a national territory serving the international economy (M. Santos, *A Natureza do Espaço*, 1996), today's poverty is a national poverty serving the international order. This reality forces us to consider some of the solutions proposed for the problem, such as when one imagines oneself able to compensate for a neoliberal politics on the national level with the possibility of a social politics on the subnational level. In the case of Brazil, it is lamentable that supposedly left-wing politicians and parties surrender to a politics of the right, putting aside the search for structural solutions and limiting themselves to the proposition of mere palliatives, which are not genuinely capable of transforming society because they will be innocuous in the medium and long-term. So-called public policies, when they exist, are not capable of replacing social policies, which are more coherent with further policies (economics, territorial, and so forth).

This is not a question of leaving the search for a compensatory politics of relief for the consequences of poverty to the inferior levels of government, such as municipalities or states, while the more dynamic actions, those produced at the federal level, are increasingly oriented toward the creation of more poverty. The ideal situation would be to have a comprehensive vision that includes the redistribution of powers and resources between the various politico-administrative spheres of power. This situation should also include the redistribution of prerogatives and duties between the various territorial scales, and should perhaps even consider the reformulation of the federation as a whole. However, for this to be, it is

necessary to have a national project, one that cannot be a formulation automatically derived from the hegemonic project and limited to the interests of the current globalization. On the contrary, such a national project must not only understand the realities and necessities of each nation but must also constitute a promise to reformulate the world order itself.

In the current conditions, a great complication arises from the fact that globalization is frequently considered inevitable. This fatalism is based on an exaggerated enchantment by cutting-edge techniques and a neglect for the national level, leaving aside the role of the territory utilized by society as one of its dynamic portraits. Such a vision of the world, a sort of return to the old notion of the *technological fix*¹³ (a single efficient technology), consecrates the adoption of a closed point of departure that leads to the acceptance of the reign of necessity as indisputable and ineluctable and decrees the death of hope and generosity. Exclusion and social debt appear as if they were something fixed, immutable, and unbending, whereas just as with any other order, it can be substituted for a more humane one.

3.7 What to Make of Sovereignty

The manner in which globalization affects the sovereignty of nations, the frontiers of countries, and full governability is a question that now and then returns to occupy one's thoughts, whether theoretically or as a function of concrete facts. On this matter, as on many others, the production of half-truths is infinite and we are conscripted to repeat them without much analysis of the problem. There are even those who risk speaking of deterritoriality, the end of frontiers, and the death of the state. There are optimists and pessimists, defenders and accusers.

Let us take the particular case of Brazil in order to get nearer to this question, even though our reality resembles that of many other countries on the planet. With globalization, what we have is a national territory of the international economy. This is to say that, although the territory continues to exist and the public norms that rule it are still under national jurisdiction, the more active parts of its current dynamism now have external origins. In other words, the contradiction between the external and the internal has increased. However, it is the national state, in the final analysis, that holds the monopoly on norms, without which the powerful external factors lose their effect. Without a doubt, the notion of sovereignty had to be reviewed in the face of transgressive systems of a global scope, the violent exercise of which exacerbates the porousness of frontiers. The clearest examples of these systems are information and finance, the fluidity of which is multiplied thanks to the wonders of contemporary techniques. Nevertheless, one would be mistaken to think that information and finance could always exercise force without facing internal

¹³T.N.: 'Technological fix' appears in English in the original text.

resistance. This resistance depends on an internal political will capable of preventing the influence of information and finance from being absolute.

Contrary to what is repeated with impunity, the state remains strong, and the proof of this is that neither transnational companies nor supranational institutions alone can provide the normative force to impose their political or economic will within each territory. By the intermediation of their norms of production, of labour, of financing, and of cooperation with other firms, transnational companies impact other companies and institutions in the places where these others are already established. This effect is carried out by the former imposing their behaviour upon the latter. The impact of the installation of a transnational company, though, goes beyond mere changes to the technical process of production and reaches all of the surroundings. For example, it reaches the market itself as well as the geographic infrastructure of support, without which a company cannot succeed. In the end, it is the national state that regulates the financial world and builds infrastructure, thus assigning to the chosen great companies the condition of their viability. The same can be said of the supranational institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank, United Nations, World Trade Organization), the edicts or recommendations of which are dependent on the internal decisions of each country in order to be effective. Frequently, the Central Bank serves as a link (situated above the Parliament) between an external political will and an absence of internal will. For this reason, it has become commonplace to award the directorship of these central banks to persons more committed to the ideological postulates of international finance than to the concrete interests of national societies.

The surrender of sovereignty, however, is not something natural, inescapable, automatic, because it depends on the manner in which each country decides to insert itself into the world of this so-called globalization.

The state alters its rules and features in a game that combines external influences and internal realities. However, there is not only one path, and these paths are not necessarily those of passivity. Consequently, it is not true that globalization prevents the formation of a national project. Without a project like this, governments remain at the mercy of external demands, however misplaced those demands may be. This appears to be the present case of Brazil. In spite of this, we believe that there is always time to correct a faulty course and, even in the globalized world, to bring the interests of the nation into triumph.

Chapter 4

The Territory of Money and Fragmentation

4.1 Introduction

In the world of globalization, geographic space gains new contours, characteristics, definitions, and also a new importance, since the efficacy of actions is intimately related to their localization. The most powerful actors reserve the best pieces of territory for themselves and leave the rest to the others.

In a situation of extreme competitiveness such as the one in which we live, places exacerbate the clashes between various actors, and the territory as a whole reveals the movements of the background of society. With the prominence of technical systems and information, globalization subverts the ancient game of territorial evolution and imposes new logics.

Territories tend toward a generalized compartmentalization that leads to both an association and a conflict between the general movement of world society and the particular movement of each fraction of national society, whether those fractions be regional or local. These movements occur in parallel to a process of fragmentation that robs from the collectivities the command over their own destinies; moreover, the new actors also do not possess instruments of regulation that are of interest to society as a whole. An example of this tendency is the variety of modern agriculture that has been made scientific and global, as we have seen in countries like Brazil. The analysis of this sort of agriculture is essential to understanding what forms the current compartmentalization and fragmentation of the territory at the level of the country.

Another phenomenon to take into account is the role of finance in the restructuring of the geographic space. Money usurps the perspective of territorial fluidity in its favour and aims to have other activities conform to its command.

However, the territory is neither a neutral given nor a passive actor. In fact, this condition leads to the production of a true schizophrenia, since the chosen places

welcome and benefit the dominant vectors of rationality, but at the same time witness the emergence of new forms of living. This schizophrenia of territory and place plays an active role in the formation of consciousness. The geographic space reveals not only the course of history but also indicates to its actors how to consciously intervene within it.

4.2 Geographic Space: Compartmentalization and Fragmentation

Throughout human history, whether the planet was viewed as a whole or observed through the lens of continents and countries, the geographic space has always been the object of a compartmentalization. In the beginning there were islands of occupation due to the presence of groups, tribes, nations, and so on, whose spaces of life formed genuine archipelagos. Throughout time and as populations and exchange grew, this interweaving became more and more densely woven. Today, with globalization, it can be said that the totality of the surface of the Earth is compartmentalized, not only by humanity's direct actions, but also by its political presence. No fraction of the planet escapes this influence. Consequently, the old notion of *ecumene* loses its ancient definition and gains a new dimension; as such, it can be said that either the *ecumene* comprises the entire surface of the Earth, or this word no longer applies only to those parts of the planet which are actually inhabited. With globalization, any and all pieces of the Earth's surface become functional to the necessities, usages, and appetites of states and companies in this phase of history.

In this manner, the surface of the Earth has become entirely compartmentalized, and this kaleidoscope of sorts presents itself without a solution of continuity. Redefined as a function of the characteristics of an epoch, the current compartmentalization is distinguished from that of the past and frequently manifests itself as fragmentation. Its contents and definition vary through the ages but always reveal a shared and complementary, but also conflictive and hierarchical, experience of everyday life. The current compartmentalization reveals a solidary happening in identification with the milieu that, however, does not exclude the possibility of distant relations. Such solidarity and identification constitute the guarantee of a possible internal regulation. On the other hand, fragmentation reveals an everyday life in which there are exogenous parameters, that is, parameters without reference to the milieu. The asymmetry in the evolution of the various parts and the difficulty or, likewise, the impossibility of regulation, either internal or external, constitutes a remarkable characteristic of this process of fragmentation.

4.2.1 Compartmentalization: Past and Present

Until recently, humanity lived in a world of slowness in which the practice of different velocities was not a separating factor between agents. There were various rhythms, but they were not exclusive of one another. Within each area, compartments were united by rules, even if there was no continuity between those compartments. The same could be said in relation to that which was occurring on the international scale. The best example since the last quarter of the nineteenth century was that of the constitution of empires, each founded on a different technical basis that impeded neither their coexistence nor the possibility of cooperation in difference. For a century, empires such as the British, bearing the most advanced techniques of material production, transport, communications, and money, coexisted with less advanced empires from the technical point of view, such as the Portuguese or the Spanish. It can be said that politics was a compensation for the diversity and differentiation of technical or economic power, ensuring at the same time both the internal order of each of these empires and the international order. Through the intermediation of politics, each imperial country regulated its own production and that of its colonies, the commerce between the colonies and other countries, the flow of products, goods, and people, the value of money, and the forms of government. The oft-mentioned colonial pact, in the end, involved all the manifestations of historical life. The equilibriums within each empire occurred in parallel to the equilibrium between the imperial nations. In a certain way, the international order was produced through the politics of the states. Within each country, compartmentalization and solidarity presupposed the presence of certain conditions, all related by some means to the territory: a territorial economy and a territorial culture, governed by equally territorialized rules in the form of laws and treaties, but also in the form of habits.

By means of regulation, the compartmentalization of territories on the national and international scales has made it possible to neutralize differences and to pacify opposition. This all occurs through a self-renovating political process that adapts itself to the emergent realities in order to also renovate solidarity.

On the international plane, this cumulative process of adaptations has brought about the modifications of the colonial statute, which were accelerated with the end of the Second World War. On the internal plane, the searching for solidarity has led to the enrichment of social rights through the installation of different modalities of social democracy.

4.2.2 Velocity, Fluidity, Fragmentation

Today, we live in a world of velocity and fluidity. This is at the same time a virtual fluidity, made possible by the presence of new technical systems, above all, the systems of information, and an effective fluidity, realized when this potential

fluidity is utilized by hegemonic companies and institutions in exercising their actions. Potential fluidity appears in the imaginary and in ideology as if it were a common good, a fluidity for all, when in truth only some agents are able to utilize it. In this manner, these agents become the effective holders of velocity. The exercise of this fluidity depends on material availability, existent techniques, and the possibilities of action. Consequently, the world of velocity and of fluidity can only be understood through a conjunctive process in which both the current techniques and the current politics participate. This politics is undertaken by public, national, intranational and international institutions, as well as by private companies.

The current compartmentalization of territories gains this new ingredient in which incompatibilities are created between various velocities. The bearers of extreme velocities look to induce the rest of the actors to accompany them, seeking to disseminate the infrastructure essential to the desired fluidity in the places that are considered necessary for their activity. However, there is always a selectivity in this diffusion, separating the spaces of haste from others favourable to slowness. Vertical links are added to the process of compartmentalization. These links are superimposed onto the horizontal compartmentalization, which had been characteristic of human history until this recent date. The phenomenon is general since, as we have seen before, everything today is compartmented, including the entire surface of the planet.

It is through these lines of minor resistance and, consequently, of major fluidity, that the globalized market seeks to act upon its tendency toward expansion. This expansion is promoted through processes that lead to the search for unification and not properly to the search for union. The so-called global market imposes itself as the principal reason for the constitution of these spaces of fluidity and, therefore, of their utilization. Through such places, the global market imposes an operation that reproduces its own basis (John Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism*, 1998), of which competitiveness is a clear example. The apologetic literature of globalization speaks of competitiveness between states. Yet, in truth, it is a matter of competition between companies that at times push the state and its normative force to produce conditions that are favourable to those firms endowed with more power. This is how the vocation of velocity and urgency of some companies is potentiated to the detriment of others. This competitiveness aggravates disparities and differences of force while the territory, by way of its organization, constitutes an instrument of the exercise of these differences of power.

However, each company utilizes the territory as a function of its own ends and exclusively as a function of them. Companies only have eyes for their own objectives and are blind concerning all the rest. Thus, the more rational the rules of their individual actions are, the less respectful companies will be to the economic, social, political, cultural, moral, or geographic aspects of their surroundings. In fact, such rules function most of the time as an element of perturbation and even of disorder. In this movement, all that existed before the installation of these hegemonic companies is invited to adapt to their forms of being and acting, even if this adaptation provokes grand distortions in the pre-existing surroundings, including the breakdown of social solidarity.

4.2.3 *Competitiveness Versus Solidarity*

It could be said, then, that in the final analysis, competitiveness ends up destroying old solidarities, often horizontal ones, and imposes a vertical solidarity, the epicentre of which is the hegemonic company. This type of company is locally obedient to the more potent global interests and is thereby indifferent to the local surroundings. The pre-existing horizontal solidarities were historically rebuilt through an internal debate leading to adjustments inspired by the will to reconstruct, in new terms, the horizontal solidarity itself. On the other hand, the vertical solidarity that is now imposed excludes any effective local debate insofar as the hegemonic companies have only two paths: to remain so as to fully exercise their individual objectives, or to withdraw themselves.

As each hegemonic company with the objective to maintain itself as such must underscore its individual interests, its actions are rarely coordinated with those of the others, or with public power. Such dis-coordination aggravates disorganization, that is, reduces the possibilities of the practice of searching for a meaning for local life.

Each hegemonic company acts on a parcel of territory. The territory as a whole is an object of the actions of various companies, each of which, as we have seen already, are preoccupied with their own goals. By way of these goals, the hegemonic companies entice the behaviour of the rest of the companies and institutions. What remains of the nation before this new reality? How does the nation exert itself against the veritable fragmentation of the territory, a fragmentation that is a consequence of the contemporary forms of action of the hegemonic companies?

The word fragmentation imposes itself with total force because, in the conditions described above, there is no possibility of regulation, or if there is, it only privileges some actors. Thus, at the same time that these actors produce an order for their own cause, they create disorder for everything else. As this *disorderly order* is global, inherent to the productive process of the current globalization, it has no limits; but it has no limits because it also has no purposes. In such a manner, no regulation is possible because none is desired. This new power of the great companies, exercised blindly, is divisive, exclusionary, and fragmenting by nature, and holds hostage the autonomy of the rest of the actors.

The resulting fragments of this process articulate themselves externally according to a strange twofold logic: by their distant headquarters, which are far from the concerned space of action, and by their non-conformity with the pre-existing meaning of the lives in the area in which they are installed. In this way, a genuine territorial alienation is produced to which other forms of alienation correspond.

Within the same country, different forms and rhythms of evolution are created, which are governed by the specific goals of each hegemonic company. These companies drag along other social actors through the acceptance, or even the elaboration, of alien or alienated 'national-regional' discourses.

At the same time, there is a parallel elaboration of reactive discourses endowed with specific content and destined to show non-conformity with the existing forms of insertion into the 'world'. In certain cases, both new sovereignties, as in the example of the former Yugoslavia, and expanded autonomies are created. These autonomies ordain what could be called *region-countries*, of which the most emblematic example derives from Spain. How does one resolve this issue from within one country whose past did not offer the existence of particular solidly established cultures as a shared heritage? How does one solve this problem when there is not a regional political will already exercised as power?

This problem is becoming more acute insofar as the current territorial compartmentalizations are not viewed as fragmentation. This normally happens when the interpretation of the national fate is given over to seemingly totalizing visions that are, in reality, particularistic. The same is true in certain approaches to the economy, and likewise to political science, where the notion of the territory seen as *used territory*¹ is not taken into account. This notion highlights the territory as a structure endowed with its own movement. It truly is better to consider the nation by the intermediation of its territory because all that lives is represented within it.

4.3 Globalized Scientific Agriculture and the Alienation of the Territory

Since the beginning of time, agriculture appeared as an activity that reveals profound relations between human societies and their environment. At the beginning of history such relations were, in fact, between human groups and nature. The advance of civilization attributes to humanity a growing capacity to alter natural features when possible by way of the deepening of techniques and of their diffusion. Furthermore, civilization's advance allows humanity to reduce the importance of its own impact and, also, by way of social organization, to modify its consequences. The last centuries mark, for agricultural activity, and with the humanization and mechanization of geographic space, a considerable change of quality, arriving recently at the constitution of a geographic milieu that we can term technical-scientific-informational. This milieu is characteristic not only of urban life but also of the rural world, both in

¹T.N.: According to Santos et al., the used territory is 'the space of all people, regardless of their differences; the space of all institutions, regardless of their force; the space of all companies, regardless of their power. This is the space of all the dimensions of the happening, of all the determinations of the social totality. This is a vision that incorporates the movement of the whole, permitting it to correctly confront the task of analysis'. (Santos, M. et al. 2001. *O Papel Ativo da Geografia: um Manifesto. Biblio 3 W. Revista Bibliográfica de Geografia y Ciencias Sociales*. Nº 270, 24 Jan.). Our translation of this text into English can be found at Santos, M. et al. (2017). The Active Role of Geography: a Manifesto, *Antipode*, 49, 4. The concept of used territory is also discussed in Santos, M. (2017). The Return of the Territory, In Melgaço, L. & Prouse, C. *Milton Santos: A Pioneer in Critical Geography from the Global South*, Cham: Springer.

the advanced countries and in the more developed regions of the poor countries. It is in this way that a properly scientific agriculture is installed which is responsible for profound changes to agricultural production and to everyday relations.

We can now speak of a globalized scientific agriculture. When agricultural production has a global reference, it is influenced by those same laws that govern the other aspects of economic production. Thus, competitiveness, which is characteristic of global activities, leads to a deepening of the tendency toward a scientific agriculture. This, as we have seen, places demands on science, techniques, and information, bringing about the exponential increase of the quantities produced in relation to the planted surface. By its global nature, scientific agriculture leads to an extreme demand for commerce. Money, then, becomes an indispensable 'information'.

4.3.1 *The External Demand for Rationality*

In the areas where this scientific globalized agriculture is established, one can notice an important demand for scientific goods (cement, insecticides, fertilizers, correctives) and also for technical assistance. The agricultural products are chosen according to a mercantile base, which also implies a strict obedience to scientific and technical commandments. These are the conditions that govern the processes of plantation, harvesting, storage, packing, transport, and commercialization. They lead to the introduction, deepening, and diffusion of mutually contagious processes of rationalization. Thus, these conditions result in the establishment of 'systemisms', which traverse the territory and society and, due to the rationalization of practices, lead to a certain homogenization.

In reality, a certain militarization of labour also occurs, since the criterion of success is obedience to the rules suggested by hegemonic activities, without the utilization of which the recalcitrant agents are excluded. If we understand the territory as an aggregate of equipment, institutions, practices, and norms that simultaneously move and are moved by society, modern and globalized scientific agriculture ends up transforming modern farmers into serfs of the glebe. They must answer to such imperatives or leave.

In the areas where such a phenomenon occurs, there is a tendency toward a double unemployment: that of agricultural workers and other employees, and that of landowners. Thus, the modernizing rural world gives rise to a new mass of emigrants who can either direct themselves to cities or participate in the production of new frontiers. These frontiers may be within the emigrants' own countries or in foreign ones, as is the case of the *brasiguaios*.²

²T.N.: *Brasiguaios* refers to Brazilians who migrated to Paraguay, particularly during the seventies. Their population numbers about 350,000 people, typically living near the Brazilian border. The *Brasiguaios* are often accused of imposing their culture and language upon the Paraguayan population.

The situations created in such a manner are varied and multiple, producing a typology of activities in which subtypes depend on pre-existing technical, operational, and land conditions. In a specific area, despite the resemblance between predominant productions, heterogeneity is always the rule. There is, in truth, heterogeneity and complementarity. It can be said, then, that continuities and discontinuities exist simultaneously. It is in this manner that the role of the neighbourhood is enriched. Furthermore, despite the differences that exist between the concerned agents, they share certain common experiences, such as their subordination to a distant market.

Such an experience is thus quite sensitive because it is a consequence of both an 'external' demand for 'rationality' and the respective difficulties in offering it a response. A consequence of this experience is a becoming conscious of the importance of 'external' factors: a far distant market, abstract to a certain point; a competition that is, in a certain way, 'invisible'; and international and national prices over which there is no local control. The capacity to control is also unlikely with regard to other components of everyday life, such as the externally created value of currency (exchange), on which depend the value of internal production, the cost of money, and the weight upon the producer of profits earned from all types of intermediation.

4.3.2 The City of the Countryside

Modern agriculture is produced by way of its belts, zones, and areas, but its relationship with the world and with the dynamic areas of the country is given by way of points. This explains, for example, the important relationship existing in Brazil between regional cities and the city of São Paulo. In these localities, there is an offer of information, immediate and proximate, that is linked to agricultural activity. This offer of information produces an urban activity of fabrication and of services which, being the fruit of regional production, is largely 'specialized'. At the same time, another type of urban activity linked to the consumption of families and of the administration appears. The city is an indispensable pole of the technical command of production, to which the city must adapt itself and is the residence of functionaries of the public administration and of companies, but also of people who work in the countryside. Thus, despite being agricultural, these workers are also urban, which is to say, urban residents. New occupations are joined to traditional activities and professions, and modern classes are joined to the traditional middle classes and bourgeoisie, forming a mixture of ways of life, attitudes, and values. Such a city, in which the role of the technical command of production is amply broad, also has a political role against this same production. However, insofar as that agricultural production has a tendency to be global, this political role is limited, incomplete, and indirect. Confusingly discerned from these places, the world is seen as a fickle partner. Without a doubt, the various actors have different interests, sometimes convergent, and certainly complementary. This results in a local production of ideas that are at the same time mixed and contradictory, and leads to

visions of the world, of the country, and of the place elaborated in cooperation and in conflict. Such a process creates ambiguities and perplexities, but also a certainty justified by the emergence of the city as a political place. The city now has a double role: it is a regulator of agricultural work, thirsty for an interpretation of the movement of the world, and is the headquarters of a composite and complex local society, the diversity of which constitutes a permanent invitation to debate.

4.4 Compartmentalization and Fragmentation of Space: The Brazilian Case

The analysis of the Brazilian case concerning agricultural modernization reveals the great vulnerability of modern agricultural regions in the face of 'globalizing modernization'. If we examine the case of the majority of the states of the south and southeast and of the states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul, as well as for isolated zones of other Brazilian states, we will be able to confirm that the modernized countryside became, in practice, more open to the expansion of the current forms of capitalism than the cities. In this way, while the urban appears, under several aspects and with different nuances, as the place of resistance, the agricultural areas are now transformed into the place of vulnerability.

4.4.1 The Role of Exogenous Logics

It can be said that such areas function under a regime that is obedient to concerns subordinated to distant logics, external in relation to the area of action; but these logics are internal to the sectors and global companies that mobilize them. This relationship explains the creation of situations of alienation that escape from local or national regulations, albeit influencing local, regional, and national behaviours in all the domains of life. These exogenous logics also interfere in the behaviour of currency, credit, public expenses, and employment. In addition, they affect the functioning of the regional and urban economy by way of their determinant relationship with commerce, industry, transportation and services. In parallel, political and administrative behaviour and the content of information are transformed.

This process of adaptation of modern agricultural regions occurs with a great speed, which imposes upon them, over a short period of time, systems of living whose relationship with the milieu is a mere reflex, while the fundamental determinations come from the outside.

As the world becomes globalized, a similar movement can be rapidly reproduced in other areas, be it within a country or in another continent. Thus, the notion of competitiveness appears now in all its strength, supported politically by the manipulations of foreign commerce or of tariff barriers. In these circumstances it is

valid to question what can happen to an agricultural area that is emptied, through one of these processes, of its economical significance. What will happen, for example, to the new areas of globalized agriculture of the state of São Paulo if there is a change at the international level in the economic situation of the orange, sugar, or ethanol economies? Moreover, how could the region, the state of São Paulo, and the nation react to such a change?

The analysis of the perspectives that are offered to these modernized areas, with a tendency to extreme particularizations, must take into account that the meaning that is applied to life in all its dimensions is based, on a smaller or greater level, in exogenous factors. From a national perspective, there is the redefinition of a regional diversity that is now neither controlled nor controllable, be it by local or national society. There is now a new type of regional diversity that aggravates territorial disparities (concerning equipment, resources, information, economic and political power, population features, levels of life, and so on).

At least at a first moment and under the impetus of globalizing competitiveness, there is a production of exacerbated local or regional selfishness. This is justified by the necessity of defending the conditions of regional survival, even if it must occur at the expense of the idea of national integrity. This cultural stew can bring with it the breakdown of national solidarity and lead to a fragmentation of the territory and society.

4.4.2 Endogenous Dialectics

However, there is an internal dialectic in each of the resultant fragments. The product (or products) responsible for the command of the regional economy includes actors with diverse profiles and interests, each of whom possess a different index of satisfaction. Within each region, the alliances, agreements, and implicit or explicit social contracts are constantly remaking themselves, and hegemony is something that is always to be reconsidered.

The productive process includes both technical and political aspects. The former has more to do with production itself and has a sphere of incidence that is limited to the boundaries of the region. The political side of the productive process, on the other hand, which is related to commerce, prices, subsidies, the cost of money, etc., is headquartered outside of the region. Additionally, the processes related to this political aspect often escape the control (and even the understanding) of the foremost concerned agents. All this gradually makes clear to local society that it does not have the last word in relation to the local production of value.

In these circumstances, the city gains a new dimension and a new role, which occurs through an equally renovated life of relations, the intensity of which includes the tasks related to globalized production. For this reason, the city becomes the place where the relationships between people, companies, activities and ‘fragments’ of the territory with the country and the ‘world’ are better clarified. This role of the hub that is now attributed to the regional centres of modernized agricultural

production makes these centres into the location of the active production of a discourse (with pretensions to be unitary) and of a politics with pretensions to be more than an ensemble of particular rules. However, in the long and even medium term, such politics shows, in the end, its debility, relativity, inefficacy, and non-operability. What are we to complain about to the local power in the face of the limits of its competence? What to claim from the federal states? What efficiently to request from global economic agents, when we know that they can satisfy their appetites for profit simply by moving their place of operation? The first step in finding the clue of an answer is to go back to the notions of nation, national solidarity, and the national state. From a practical point of view, we suggest going back to the idea, one that we have already expressed on other occasions, of a federation of places, with the reconstruction of the Brazilian federation through a local cell. This federation of places has to be conceived, though, in such a manner that the national territory meets a compartmentalization that does not become a fragmentation. Thus, rather than being totally subordinate to the process of globalization, the federation would now be rebuilt from bottom to top.

4.5 The Territory of Money

The arm wrestling between Brazilian municipal and state governments and the federal government goes beyond a mere technical discussion in order to know who should bear the burden of the financial debts of the 27 states and of the more than 5500 municipalities. The issue is actually related to the federation and its inadequacy to this new period of history marked by the emergence of globalization. What is on the table is the very system of relations constituted by the new demographic, economic, and social contents of states and municipalities, and the maintenance of the normative content of territory. All of this is happening in the present moment when, in face of globalization, a conflict is being produced between globalized money and the responsibilities of the political-administrative divisions of the Brazilian state.

4.5.1 Definitions

The territory is not merely the result of the superposition of a set of natural systems and a set of systems of things created by humanity. The territory is the ground plus the population, which is to say, it is the identity, fact, and feeling of belonging to that which belongs to us. The territory is the basis of labour, residence, material and spiritual exchanges, and of life. But at the same time, the territory not only hosts these factors, but also affects them. When the territory is mentioned it is important to highlight that it is in fact the used territory that is being invoked, that is, the one utilized by a given population. Territory and population make one another, in the manner of the famous saying of Churchill: first we build the houses, then they build us.

The idea of the tribe, people, nation and, then, of the national state comes from this deep relationship.

Money is an invention of the life of relations and appears as a consequence of an economic activity for the exchange of which the simple barter system is no longer sufficient. When complexity is a result of productive specializations and economic life becomes equally complex, money becomes indispensable and ends up imposing itself as a general equivalent of all things that are the object of commerce. In reality, money also constitutes a given of this process, thus facilitating its deepening, since it becomes representative of the value attributed to production and labour and to their respective results.

4.5.2 Money and Territory: Historical Situations

At a first moment there was a local money that was characteristic of an elementary commercial horizon. This money was either limited to certain geographical contexts or designed to attend to the needs of a far-away circulation and commerce run by itinerant merchants, guarantors of the value of merchandise. Although characterized by numerous compartmentalizations, this was a world without movement, slow and stable, the fragments of which were almost self-contained. Such numerous monads existed simultaneously, but without the general principle suggested by Leibniz.

In this first moment, the functioning of the territory was based, in a certain sense, on its natural features. Humanity was then obliged to adapt itself to nature, an adaptation that was still carried out with a small technical intermediation. The social relationships present were few, simple, and sparse. People knew their vicinity, and the mysteries of those surroundings were due only to the existence of unknown natural forces. Such material conditions ended up imposing themselves over the rest of social life, in a situation where the value of each piece of land was attributed by its use. In this way, existence could be interpreted through the direct relationships observed between people and between people and the milieu. The territory used by local society governed the manifestations of social life, including money.

4.5.3 Metamorphoses of the Two Categories Throughout Time

The expansion of commerce brings with it a growing interdependence between societies that, until then, had been relatively isolated. The number of objects and values to be exchanged grows. These very exchanges stimulate the diversification and increase of volume of a production directed at a far-away consumption. Money becomes a condition both of this barter and of the production of each group. Money

thus becomes instrumental to the regulation of economic life and guarantees the enlargement of its scope and the frequency of its use.

In reality, it is not only international commerce that grows, expands, and becomes more complex and dense, but internal commerce as well. Thus, more and more things tend to become objects of exchange, valued more by the exchange itself than by their use. As a consequence, money claims to be a homogenous and permanent measure. In this manner, the indispensability of money increases and invades more aspects of economic and social life.

In parallel, the territory appears as an arena of more and more numerous movements, which are founded on a law of value based both on the characteristics of production in each place and the possibilities and realities of circulation. More and more, money becomes an essential given to the use of territory.

However, the law of value is also extended to the places proper. Each of these places represents, in a given circumstance and in function of the commerce in which they participate, a certain index value. This index is also the basis of the movements that part from or arrive at these places.

The greater the number of movements, the greater the complexity of internal and external relationships and the greater the need for regulation. Money constitutes one of the elements of this regulation despite this not being its central role. In reality, the central role of regulation is attributed to the category of the state; hence, the need for the state appears as an imperative. In what concerns competencies and resources, for example, the state is involved in the attribution of external limits (the established frontiers), internal limits (the multi-levelled political-administrative subdivision) and normative content (laws and customs). It is in such a way that several interdependent categories are historically installed: the state territory, the national territory, the national state. These are the categories that, together, govern money.

Consequently, there is a national money that, despite an increasing external commerce, bears the features of its country and is regulated by it. It can be said that this money is, in a certain way, commanded from the inside.

4.5.4 Globalized Money

With globalization, the use of the available techniques permits the installation of a fluid money that is relatively invisible and practically abstract.

As a general equivalent, money becomes a truly universal equivalent at the same time that it gains a practically autonomous existence in relation to the rest of the economy. With such an autonomy, one can even say that money in its pure state becomes its own general equivalent. Perhaps due to this, the concrete existence and efficacy of money are a consequence of the rules with which it imposes itself over other monies and over countries. There is thus an elaboration of a discourse without which the efficacy of money would be infinitely smaller and its force less evident. On that note, it is through this ideological characteristic, equivalent to a true falsification of the criterion, that global money also becomes despotic.

In the current conditions, the logics of money impose themselves over socio-economic and political logics by forcing mimesis, adaptations, renditions, and so on. Such logics occur through two different aspects. One is that of the money of companies which, being responsible for a sector of production, are also financial agents. These agents are mobilized in function of the survival and expansion of each firm in particular. On the other hand, there are also the logics of the global financial governments, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and banks that disguise themselves as regional entities, such as the Inter-American Bank. It is through their intermediation that finance appears as a general intelligence.

This global intelligence is exercised by what can be called global accounting, founded on a set of parameters through which those global governments measure, evaluate, and classify national economies. Such an evaluation occurs by way of an arbitrary choice of variables that only contemplates a certain parcel of production, almost leaving aside the rest of the economy. For this reason it can be said that when this criterion of evaluation is adopted, the Gross Natural Product is no more than an alias for this so-called global accounting.

It is by way of this mechanism that autonomous global money, and no longer capital as a whole, has today become the primary manager of the territory, whether nationally or in its subdivisions.

Before, the territory contained the money, in a double sense: money as a representative of the territory that housed it, and money being, in part, regulated by the territory, considered as used territory. Today, under the influence of global money, the content of territory escapes every internal regulation. This lack of regulation is related to a permanent instability of the territory, instability of which the different agents only constitute passive witnesses.

The territorial action of global money in its pure state ends up being a blind action, which generates ungovernabilities by virtue of its effects not only on economic life, but also on administrative life.

In the territory, global finance installs itself as the rule of rules, an imperious set of norms that spills over the totality of the social edifice. Global finance, in order to be better able to oppose the current structures, ignores them and subsequently imposes new structures. At the scale of the place, global finance exerts itself through the existence of people, companies, and institutions, creating perplexities and suggesting interpretations that can lead to the enlargement of consciousness.

4.5.5 Regional Situations

The desire to the homogenization of global money is contradicted by local resistances to its expansion. In this manner, the process of the expansion of money tends to be different accordingly to the different socio-economical and political spaces.

There is, also, a desire for adaptation to the new conditions imposed by money, since financial fluidity is considered a prerequisite for being competitive and, consequently, for being successful in the globalized world.

The formation of the European Common Market, that is, the European Economic Community, the foundation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the intended establishment of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) obey this same principle of adaptation. This happens in a way to permit the respective economies, especially that of the dominant states and their companies, to be able to participate in a more aggressive way in global commerce. All this occurs in order to search for something that seems to be essential to them: the coveted hegemony.

In what concerns this question, Europe appears as the most advanced subcontinent. In truth, the process of European unification began after the Second World War and is accomplishing successive steps, the most recent of these steps being the foundation of the common financial market, of which the single currency, the euro, is the principal symbol. The previous steps constituted a sort of preparation for financial unification and included measures aimed toward the fluidity of merchandise, people, labour force, and of territory itself. This preparation took place even in underdeveloped countries, in a way that Europe as a whole was able to become an equally fluid continent. Without this, and without the reinforcement of the idea of citizenship—a citizenship that has now become multinational for the signatories of the Schengen Agreement—it would be impossible to think about a common currency without increasing the already existent inequalities and imbalances.

Complementing this background, monetary unification is considered indispensable to the establishment of a European economy that is competitive on the global level. Moreover, there is a renovation of the division of labour by which certain countries are reinforcing some of their activities and renouncing others. These decisions are made after sometimes long and arduous discussions in Brussels. In reality, though, this intra-European unification and equalization end up becoming one more episode of a war, since they are directed at strengthening Europe so it can both compete with the other members of the Triad and take advantage of its own asymmetric relations with the rest of the world.

The Latin American and Brazilian cases are different, though. The Mercosul³ itself is, for now, limited to commercial exchanges, and its project is less comprehensive in relation to social, cultural, and political relations. There is no clear concern in searching for a homogeneous development. Moreover, the initiatives of investment have much more to do with increasing production, which is to say, with the flourishing of a certain number of companies interested in the regional market. Some of them are, indeed, equally involved in the global market. On the other hand, contrary to the European case, these national currencies are neither exactly convertible nor directly communicable between them. Their relationship with the world

³T.N.: The *Mercado Comum do Sul* (Mercosul), or Southern Common Market, is an economic and political agreement originally signed in 1991 by Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay, and which later included Venezuela and Bolivia (as an accessing member).

is poor, both qualitative and quantitatively, since they are dependent currencies. The loss of value of these currencies increases in the face of globalization, which constitutes one more element of the worsening of their proper dependency.

4.5.6 The Effects of Global Money

What was just exposed before shows why the decision of participating in globalization in only a passive way may end up being harmful. The better the application of the model, the worse it is for the country. This situation is even more complicated in the large and complex countries, insofar as the homogenizing drive of global capital will be exercised over a basis formed by sections very different from one another. As a consequence, the differences and inequalities of these sections are amplified under such unitary action.

Regulative and homogenizing money worsens heterogeneities and aggravates dependencies. This way, by creating or increasing social and territorial fractures and menacing national unity, money contributes to the deterioration of national solidarity.

The content of the territory as a whole and of each of its compartments change abruptly. Additionally, the territory loses a greater or smaller part of its identity in favour of forms of regulation that are foreign to the local sense of life.

The issue of the federation and of the governability of the nation should be analyzed through this prism: insofar as the government of the nation is solidary to the objectives of external forces, fundamental problems emerge to states and municipalities.

As the question is in fact structural, the problems of states and municipalities are one and the same, in the end. These problems are constituted by the current forms of compartmentalization of the territory and its new content, which includes the forms of action of international money.

4.5.7 Epilogue

The question that strikes our heads as if it were the sword of Damocles is the following: are we going to reconstruct the federation in order to better serve money or to attend to the needs of the population? Now, everything is being done in order to remake the federation in a way that is instrumental to financial forces. It is the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance, in combination with international financial institutions that orient the great ongoing reforms. We must thus prepare ourselves for the new phase that is already, in fact, announcing itself—that of the reconstruction of the political framework in the service of society, which is to say, of the population.

4.6 Verticalities and Horizontalities

The subject of verticalities and horizontalities has already been discussed in my book *A Natureza do Espaço: Técnica e Tempo, Razão e Emoção* (1996), particularly in the twelfth chapter. We are now going to analyze this same subject from a new perspective, aspiring to a prospective vision made by considering these two superposed and complementary approaches of the current geographic space.

4.6.1 Verticalities

Verticalities can be defined, at a territory, as a set of points forming a space of flows. This idea reminds us in a certain way of the writings of François Perroux (*L'économie du XXe siècle*, 1961) when he described the economic space. Such a notion was recently re-appropriated by Manuel Castells (*The Rise of Network Society*, 1996). This space of flows would be, in reality, a subsystem within the totality-space. This is so because what counts for the hegemonic actors is, overall, this set of points that are adequate to their productive tasks, tasks that are characteristic of the economic activities that command this historic period.

The system of production that makes use of this space of flows is constituted by networks, it is thus a reticular system that thirsts for fluidity and velocity. Full participation in the process is reserved to the actors of fast time, while the remaining actors only rarely take advantage of fluidity. These spaces of flows are characterized by an organizational solidarity, which is to say, the relations that maintain the aggregation and cooperation between agents result in a process of organization in which factors external to the areas of incidence of such agents are predominant. Let us term macro-actors those who, from the outside of the area, determine the internal modalities of action. In a final analysis, it is the task of these macro-actors to organize the work of all the other actors, who, in one way or another, depend on the regulation directed by the former. The fact that each one must adapt local behaviours to global interests, which are always changing, leads the organizational process to occur with discontinuities, the rhythm of which depends on the number and the power corresponding to each macro-agent.

Through the intermediation of the aforementioned points of the space of flows, macro-companies end up gaining a regulating role over the entirety of space. In addition to this control one must add the explicit or dissimulated action of the state in all its territorial levels. This regulation is often one that is subordinated, since in a large number of cases it is directed in favour of hegemonic actors. Taking into account a specific area, the space of flows has an integrating role between broader economic and spatial levels. However, such an integration is vertical, dependent, and alienating, since the essential decisions concerning local processes are foreign to the locality and obey distant motivations.

In such conditions there is a tendency toward the prevalence of corporate interests over public interests in relation to the evolution of the territory, the economy, and local societies. Within this frame, the politics of companies, that is, their policies, intends and manages, by way of governance, to become the mainstream politics. In reality, this is a blind politics, since it leaves the construction of the destiny of an area to the private interests of a company that does not compromise with the local society.

In the above-described situation, there is an installation of centrifugal forces that are certainly, with greater or lesser intensity, determinant of the ensemble of behaviours. Moreover, in certain cases when they manage to influence the whole or the majority of the productive body, such centrifugal forces are at the same time determinant and dominant. Such a dominance is also a carrier of hegemonic rationality, the capacity to influence of which facilitates the search for unification and homogenization.

The parts of territory that form this space of flows constitute the realm of real time. They are subordinated to a universal clock, measured by the globalized temporality of those hegemonic companies present. Organized this way, the space of flows tends to organize the total space, a task that is facilitated by the fact that the former is superimposed upon the later.

The economic model established in this way tends to reproduce itself. This is true even if the model contains specific topologies linked to the nature of products, the force of the concerned companies, and the resistance of the pre-existent space. The hegemonic model is planned to be, in its individual action, indifferent to its surroundings. However, the surroundings resist, in a certain manner, the plenitude of this hegemony. Nevertheless, this hegemony is exerted in its limit form, since the company does its best to exhaust the virtualities and perspectives of its 'rational' action. The intensity of this limit defines the respective operation from the viewpoint of its profitability, compared to that of other companies and places. Should the hegemonic companies consider such profitability to be unsatisfactory, they simply migrate.

Verticalities are carriers of a relentless order, which the unceasing incitement to follow represents an invitation to estrangement. Thus, the more 'modernized' and penetrated by this logic, the more the respective spaces become alienated. The group of conditions of the realization of verticalities shows that it is unnecessary for them to have a meaning in order to be brought into effect, since the greater moving force would be that animal instinct of companies which was mentioned decades ago by Stephan Hymer. This instinct is now multiplied and enhanced by globalization.

Verticalities clearly materialize Jean Gottmann's idea according to which the territory can be seen as a resource ("The Evolution of the Concept of Territory", *Information sur les Sciences Sociales*, 1975). This is the case precisely because of the pragmatic use assured by the modernized equipping of the chosen point of the territory.

4.6.2 *Horizontalities*

Horizontalities are made up of zones of contiguity that form continuous extensions. Let us once again make use of the vocabulary François Perroux proposed in referring to the existence of a ‘banal space’ in opposition to the economic space. The banal space is the space of all: companies, institutions, and people; the space of everyday experiences.

This banal space, this continuous extension in which the authors are considered in their contiguity, is a space that sustains and explains a group of interdependent productions that occur within an area whose characteristics also constitute an element of production. All the agents are implicated in one way or another, and the respective timings, be they faster or slower, are imbricated. In such circumstances it can be said that an organic solidarity emerges from the geographic space. This solidarity is formed by the common existence of actors exerting themselves over an equally common territory. Regardless of the level of these activities, they owe their creation and alimentation to the offerings of the local geographic milieu. Such an inseparable ensemble develops and changes, but this movement can be seen as a continuity precisely because of the central role played by the local geographic milieu.

In the banal space, the action of the state, including its equally banal functions, is also limited. In reality, if the political circumstances were different, it would be in this banal space that public power would find the best conditions for its intervention. The fact that the state worries above all about the performance of macro-companies, to which it offers general rules that ignore particularities created at the geographic space, leads to the enlargement of verticalities and at the same time allows the intensification of the personality of horizontalities. At these horizontalities, despite existing companies with different levels of technique, capital, and organization, the principle that permits the survival of each company is the search for a certain integration in the process of action.

We are talking here about the local production of a solidary integration obtained through internal horizontal solidarities, the nature of which is not only economic, social, and cultural but also truly geographic. The survival of the ensemble, despite the divergent interests of the different agents, depends on the exercise of solidarity, which is indispensable to collective work and makes visible the common interest. Such an action undertaken in common is neither necessarily the result of explicit pacts nor of clearly established politics. The proper existence, which adapts itself to situations where the power of command often evades the respective actors, ends up requiring a permanent state of alert from everyone in the sense of apprehending changes and discovering solutions thought to be indispensable.

It can be said that such a situation guarantees the permanence of centripetal forces. These forces, despite not being determinant (since verticalities receive inputs from horizontalities) are dominant. Such centripetal forces ensure their own survival by the fact that the scope of the actions of actors is limited. All these actors are

mixed in a limited geographic space that is, at the same time, the basis of the operation of this force.

Thus, horizontalities admit, beyond the rationalities typical of the verticalities that cross them, the presence of other rationalities (called irrationalities by those that would desire the hegemonic rationalities to be the only ones present). In fact, they are counter-rationalities, that is, forms of coexistence and of regulation created from the territory itself and which rest in this territory regardless of the will for unification and homogenization, a will that is a characteristic of the hegemonic rationality typical of verticalities. The presence of these verticalities produces tendencies toward fragmentation, with the constitution of alveoli representative of particular forms of being horizontal.

4.6.3 The Search for Meaning

Contrary to verticalities, which are governed by a single and relentless clock, horizontalities comprise different simultaneous clocks realizing diverse temporalities.

A horizontality constitutes a space with a vocation for solidarity that sustains a second-level organization, while a permanent drive toward disorganization is exerted over this space in the service of hegemonic actors. This dialectical process forbids the increasing and invasive power of hegemonic actors, founded on the space of flows, from being capable of eliminating the banal space, which continuously redefines itself.

It can be said that in contrast to the order imposed by hegemonic actors upon the space of flows, and in contrast to the alienated obedience of the subaltern and homogenized actors, the idea and the reality of Politics recreate themselves in banal spaces. Within a specific area, the practice of this Politics has become an indispensable factor to the adjustment necessary to the functioning of the ensemble. Through agreements and disagreements and the practice of debate, a re-adaptation to the new forms of existence is sought, either explicitly or implicitly.

The aforementioned process is also the one by which a society and a territory are continuously searching for a meaning and, because of this, exert a reflexive life. In this case the territory is not only the location of a pragmatic action, since its utilization also includes an input of life, an amount of emotion that permits values to represent a role. The territory transforms itself into something beyond a mere resource and constitutes, quoting again from Jean Gottmann, a shelter.

In reality, the same portion of the territory can be at once a resource and a shelter, since it can condition the more pragmatic actions but also allow generous tendencies. Both movements are concomitant. Under the present circumstances, the movement that is determinant and which brings with it a tendency toward an overwhelming diffusion is that of the creation of a pragmatic order, while the production of the banal space is merely residual. However, it is possible to imagine another scenario in which the behaviour of the space of flows, rather than being subordinate to the

desires of money, as it is now, finds a break from this form of action so that it might be subordinated to a complete realization of life. All of this in such a way that the banal spaces augment their capacity to serve the plenitude of humankind.

4.7 The Schizophrenia of the Space

As we know, the world as a set of essences and possibilities does not exist for itself, but only for others. It is the space, which is to say, the places that realize and reveal the world so as to make it historicized and geographized, that is, empiricized.

In fact, the places are the world, a world that they reproduce in specific, individual, and diverse manners. The places are singular but also global, manifestations of the totality-world of which they are particular forms.

4.7.1 *Being a Citizen in the Place*

In the present conditions, the citizen of the place also intends to be a citizen of the world. However, the truth is that it is impossible for the world to regulate places. Consequently, the concept of a citizen of the world becomes a mere wish, a promise, and a distant possibility. Since the efficient global actors are, in the final analysis, anti-human and anti-citizen, the possibility of the existence of a citizen of the world is conditioned by national realities. In fact, the citizen only exists (or does not exist) as a citizen of a country.

Being a citizen of a country, particularly when the territory is very large and the society is very unequal, can only constitute a perspective of full citizenship, which is to be achieved at subnational levels, starting at the local. This is the case of Brazil, where the realization of citizenship, given the current conditions, demands a reevaluation of places and an adaptation of their political condition.

The multiplicity of regional and municipal situations brought along by globalization generates an enormous variety of frameworks of life, the reality of which presides over people's everyday life and shall be the foundations for a civilized life in common. Thus, the possibility of a full citizenship of persons depends on locally sought solutions. This is true as long as a federation of places is instituted within the nation, a new political-territorial structuration that comprises the indispensable distribution of resources, prerogatives and obligations. Starting from the country as a federation of places, the construction in a second moment of the world as a federation of countries will then be made possible.

In both phases, it is a construction from the bottom to the top, the central point of which is the existence of strong individualities and the correspondent juridical guarantees. The geographic basis of this construction will be the place, considered here as the space of the exercise of a complete existence. However, we remain too far from accomplishing this ideal. How might we accomplish it?

4.7.2 *The Everyday Life and the Territory*

Territories, as well as places, are schizophrenic. This is so because, on the one hand, they host the vectors of globalization, which install themselves over those areas in order to impose their new order. On the other hand, a counter-order is produced in these territories and places given the accelerated production of poor, excluded, and marginalized people. Increasingly reunited in more numerous and larger cities, and experiencing the condition of neighbourhood (a condition that is revealing, according to Sartre), these people are not permanently subordinated to the hegemonic rationality. Because of this, they are often able to engage in actions that can be considered the counter-face of pragmatism. Thus, together with the quest for survival, we can notice the production at the foundations of society of a pragmatism that is mixed with emotion, a mixture that arises from places and from the coexistence of people. This mixture of pragmatism and emotion is also a sort of insurrection in relation to globalization. It leads to the discovery that, despite being what we are, we can also wish to be something else.

For this to occur, the role of the place is crucial. The place is not merely a framework of life, but a lived space, that is, a space of an always-renovated experience. At the same time, this renovation permits both the revaluation of heritages and the questioning of present and future. The existence in *that* space exerts a revelatory role in relation to the world.

Those places considered to be global gain a larger or smaller share of the 'rationality' of the 'world'. However, this rationality propagates itself in a heterogeneous way, which is to say, allowing the coexistence of other rationalities, in other words, counter-rationalities. From the point of view of the dominant rationality, these counter-rationalities are mistakenly called 'irrationalities'. However, conformity with Hegemonic Reason is limited, while the plural production of these 'irrationalities' is unlimited. Moreover, it is only through such irrationalities that it is possible to enlarge consciousness.

Regardless of its generality, this process occurs with variations according to groups and subspaces. See, for example, the current differences between the countryside and the city. In the countryside the rationalities propagate themselves in a faster and more extensive manner. Meanwhile, in the city, irrationalities produce themselves in a more numerous and incessant way than rationalities, above all when there is at the same time a production of poverty.

This is the foundation of the schizophrenia of the place. Such a schizophrenia is overcome by the fact that each person, group, firm, and institution experience the world in their particular way. The person, group, firm, and institution constitute the agents *from the inside of the place*, which they communicate with above all by the mediation of the technique and of production itself. At the same time, the world is for the person, group, firm, and institution something *from the outside of the place*, and the communication between world and place occurs through political mediation. Technical mediation and the correspondent production, local and directly experienced, may not be fully comprehended, but are experienced as an immediate

given. Concurrently, political mediation, often exerted from far away and whose objectives are not always evident, demands a more philosophical interpretation.

A banal philosophy begins to install itself in people's minds through the discovery, supported by the everyday life, of the non-autonomy of actions and their results. This is a given common to everyone regardless of their different situations. But it is something else to go beyond the mere discovery of differences and to be able to comprehend it.

4.7.3 A Pedagogy of Existence

However, this is not all. The awareness of difference may lead to an individualistic defense of self-interest in which the search for an alternative system of ideas and life is ignored. From the point of view of ideas, the main question is to find the way that goes from immediacy to finalistic visions; and from the point of view of actions, the problem is related to moving beyond immediate solutions (for instance, selfish and only provisory efficient electoralisms) and arriving at a genuine political search that is constitutive of structural and lasting remedies.

Another characteristic of this process is that the ancient opposition between world and place is now reinforced under new parameters. Globalized information permits a vision of distant occurrences, even if only in flashes. The knowledge of other places, even if superficial and incomplete, whets curiosities. Although undoubtedly a subproduct of a biased general information, this knowledge, when supported by a systemic comprehension of the global happening, permits a vision of history as a situation and a process, both critical. Given this phenomenon, the crucial problem is how to go from a critical situation to a critical vision and, consequently, to reach a condition of consciousness. For this to occur, it is necessary to live one's very existence as something unitary and true, but also as a paradox: obey in order to subsist and resist in order to be able to think the future. Existence is thus the creator of its own pedagogy.

Chapter 5

Limits to Perverse Globalization

5.1 Introduction

The analysis of the phenomenon of globalization would be incomplete if, after recognizing the factors that made its emergence possible, we merely focused on its dominant aspects, aspects which result in so many problems for the greater part of humanity.

Our task now is to verify the limits of this evolution and to recognize the emergence of a certain number of pieces of indicative evidence that other parallel processes are arising. These processes authorize us to think that we live in a true phase of transition to a new period.

In the first place, the dense ideological system that involves and sustains the determinant actions seems not to resist to the evidence of facts. Velocity is not something that permits a generalized distribution, and the disparities of its use guarantee the exacerbation of inequalities. Everyday life, too, reveals the impossibility of the greater part of humanity enjoying the advantages offered by so-called real time. The promise that contemporaneous techniques would be able to improve everyone's existence falls down. Indeed, what can be observed is an accelerated expansion of the realm of scarcity that reaches the middle classes and creates even more poverty.

The populations involved in the process of exclusion that is thus strengthened end up relating their needs and vicissitudes to the ensemble of novelties that reaches them. An enlarged consciousness becomes possible exactly there where the phenomenon of scarcity is more evident. It is because of this that an understanding of what is going on arrives with growing clarity to poor populations and poor countries, which are more and more numerous and increasingly helpless. This explains the repudiation of the ideas and political practices that underpin the current socioeconomic process and the ever more urgent demand for new solutions. Instead of being money-based, as in the current stage of globalization, these solutions would find in mankind the basis and motor of the construction of a new world.

5.2 The Ascendant Variable

The phenomena that many call globalization, and many others call post-modernity (Renato Ortiz, *Mundialização e Cultura*, 1994) in fact together constitute a well-demarcated moment of the historical process. We prefer to consider it a period. As in any other historical period, a diversity of variables work in a concerted way, the systemic vision of which is indispensable to the understanding of what is happening. But as in every period, after a particular point certain variables lose their vigour and constitute truly descendant variables, while other variables begin to impose themselves. In reality, the ascendant variables are the ones that reveal the production of a new period, which is to say, that point to the future.

The current moment of the history of the world seems to indicate the emergence of numerous ascendant variables that exist as part of a system. Indeed, this permits one to think that the conditions of the realization of a new history are being produced.

For the time being, we decline to provide an exhaustive list of phenomena, but do not hesitate to point out some facts that seem to us to be very characteristic of the ongoing changes. One of them is the increasing disenchantment with techniques, together with a gradual recovery of good sense, in opposition to common sense, in other words, in opposition to the alleged rationality suggested both by the techniques themselves and the politics of their use. Another significant emerging factor is the relatively accelerating impossibility of access to these techniques because of the growth of poverty across the continents. In addition, besides the invasive quality of hegemonic techniques, new non-hegemonic techniques are constantly being created and persisting. We can risk proposing a prognostication here by recognizing, through the ensemble of evidences, the announcement of a new historical period, a period that will replace the current one. We would be at the dawn of a new era in which the population, that is, the people, would constitute the main concern. This would be a truly popular period of history that has already been demonstrated by the fragmentations and particularizations perceivable everywhere due to the culture and the territory.

5.3 The Limits of the Dominant Rationality

The Rational Project begins to show its limitation. This is perhaps because we are reaching that paroxysm foreseen by Weber (*Economy and Society*, 1922), a paroxysm to be realized when the process of expansion of capitalist rationality becomes unlimited. It seems that we are reaching this frontier particularly now that at the different levels of economic, social, individual life we are experiencing a totalitarian rationality followed by a loss of reason. The debauchery of needs and scarcity that reach an increasingly wide parcel of human society enables the recognition of the reality of this perdition.

A considerable portion of humanity is no longer capable of obeying the laws, norms, rules, and mores derived from this hegemonic rationality because of either disinterest or incapacity. This explains the proliferation of 'illegal', 'irregular', and 'informal' individuals.

In the process of life, this incapacity combines inherited and innovated practices and theories, traditional religions and new convictions. It is in this melting pot that various factions of society pass from a previous situation of conformity associated with conformism to a superior condition of production of consciousness, which is to say, conformity without conformism. This leads to the production of the rediscovery by humanity of true reason, and it is not astonishing that such a rediscovery occurs precisely in the social, economic, and geographic spaces that are equally 'non-conforming' in relation to the dominant rationality.

In the sphere of the dominant rationality only a slight margin is left for variety, creativity, and spontaneity. Meanwhile, in the other spheres there is an emergence of counter- and parallel rationalities that are frequently labeled irrationalities. These so-called irrationalities are in reality other forms of rationality, which are produced and kept by those 'from below', especially the poor. By acting in this way they manage to escape the totalitarianism of the dominant rationality. Let us recall the lessons of Sartre, according to whom it is scarcity that makes history possible, thanks to the 'negative unity of the multiplicity of people'.

Such a situation is objectively hopeful because we are now experiencing the end of the expectations nourished in the post-war period, and, in contrast, we are witnessing the enlargement of the ranks of the poor as well as the narrowing of possibilities and certitudes that the middle classes cherished until the 1980s. Another objective given is the fact that the increasingly complex realization of the process of globalization entails the welding together, if only in an elementary manner, of the philosophies produced across the various continents. This occurs to the detriment of European rationalism, which is the great-grandfather of today's dominant ideas of technocratic rationalism.

5.4 The Imaginary of Velocity

Among the family of the imaginaries of globalization and techniques, one can find the exuberantly widespread idea that velocity constitutes an irreversible given of the production of history, particularly when it meets the paroxysms of the present times. However, in reality the attribute of high velocity is exclusive only to a few persons, firms, and institutions. Even smaller is the number of those who enjoy all the technical virtualities of machines. In truth, the rest of humanity produces, circulates, and lives differently. Thanks to an ideological imposture, the reality of a minority ends up being representative of the totality, due precisely to the force of the imaginary.

However, this transformation of a potential fluidity into an effective fluidity by means of an exacerbated velocity does not have, nor does it search for, a meaning. Without a doubt, this velocity serves to exercise an unbridled competitiveness, the purpose or reason of which nobody knows.

5.4.1 *Velocity, Technique, and Power*

It can be said that velocity utilized in this way is twice a given of politics and not of the technique. Firstly, it is a choice related to the power of the agents, and secondly, it is the legitimation of this choice by means of the justification of a model of civilization. It is in this sense that we affirm that it is more a matter of politics than of the technique proper, since the latter can be used differently in function to the ensemble of social choices. Indeed, the extreme use of velocity ends up being the imperative of hegemonic companies and not of the other companies, for whom the sense of urgency is not so present. Yet, it is through this and other behaviours that the politics of companies drags along the politics of the states and supranational institutions.

In the past, the global order was constructed through a political combination that led to the non-obedience of the dictates of the most modern techniques. Let us think, for example, about the century of imperialism, over the one hundred years that stretch from the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century to the third quarter of the twentieth century. The empires, in their quality of being large political and territorial ensembles, lived and developed themselves according to different technical ages. Within their domains, each empire used groups of disparate technical advances with different technical levels. The British empire was ahead of the others concerning the possession of advanced technical resources. However, this did not impede its coexistence with other empires. Within each empire the use of the ensemble of technical resources was commanded by a set of norms that were related to commerce, production, and consumption. Each bloc had its own evolution, which was not disturbed by the existence of more significant technical advances in other empires. In reality, the commercial politics applied within each empire assured the politics of the ensemble of the occidental world (M. Santos, *A Natureza do Espaço*, 1996, pp. 36–37 and pp. 152–153). This example shows that a technical imperative is thus not certain; what exists is, in fact, a political imperative. Thus, there is no ineluctability in the face of technical systems, much less a determinism. In addition, the technique is absolute only when unrealized. The technique, then, existing only in the showcase, yet historically inexistent, would be equivalent to an abstraction. When we make reference to the historicization or geographicization of techniques, we are seeking to understand their use by humanity, and we are also trying to understand the relativization of humanity as an intermediary of action.

In this current period of globalization, the external market, with its exigencies of competitiveness, obliges an increase of velocity. But the population in its different levels, the poor and those who live far from large markets oblige the combination of

forms and levels of capitalism. Since the internal market includes all actors, it can put a brake on the will of velocity, a concept which M. Sorre has already mentioned (*Annales de Géographie*, 1948). However, both internal and external markets are interdependent and concomitant. By invading the economy and the territory with a great velocity, the upper circuit tries to destroy the pre-existent forms. Nevertheless, the territory resists, particularly in the large city thanks, among other things, to the less intense friction of distance. The small and mid-sized local companies have more potential access than, for example, a large company from Manaus, since they can reach a significant part of the city (i.e., the smaller supermarkets). This larger potential access is incremented by the fact that these companies are in an environment that is an entanglement of concerned norms, something that makes these companies less dependent on a single norm to subsist. However, with globalization and its imaginary, which is common to the imaginary of hegemonic techniques, both are taken as indispensable to full participation in the historical process.

5.4.2 From the Despotic Clock to Divergent Temporalities

It is true, too, that with the globalized interdependency of places and the planetization of dominant technical systems, the latter seem to impose themselves as invaders. They function as parameters in the evaluation of the efficacy of other places and other technical systems. It is in this sense that the hegemonic technical system appears as something absolutely indispensable and the resulting velocity appears as a desirable given to all those who intend to participate, with full rights, in the current modernity. However, the current velocity and all that comes with it and derives from it are not ineluctable and indispensable. In reality, this velocity does not benefit or interest the majority of humanity. So, what purpose does this despotic clock really serve? The current crises are, in the final analysis, a result of the contemporary acceleration through the privileged use of the current possibilities of fluidity by some hegemonic actors. As such practice does not correspond to a moral objective, being devoid of meaning, the result is the installation of situations in which the movement finds justification in itself. This is the case of the speculative capital market. Such an autonomy of velocity is one of the reasons for the characteristic disorder of the current period.

When we consider the technique in combination with politics and admit the attribution of other uses to it, we are convinced that it is possible to imagine an other globalization and an other world. The central issue is the resurgence of the course of history, that is, to return humanity to its central position.

Such a will for transformation must include the revision of the key words of our period and the ideological system that contaminates them. Let us analyze the question of *velocity*, which can be considered a paradigm of the current epoch, but also as what this epoch represents as emblematic. In truth, regardless of the social body, hegemonic velocity constitutes one of its features, but the definition of reality can only be obtained when the different velocities present are considered. In any

case, the efficacy of velocity does not come from the subjacent technique. In fact, the efficacy of hegemonic velocity has a political nature and depends on the socioeconomic system in practice. It can be said that, in a given situation, such hegemonic velocity is an ideologically imposed velocity.

As in everything else, the understanding of history cannot be left to the immediate comprehension of technical phenomenon. Thus, it is crucial to understand how, in this same situation, the technique and politics are related, attributing to the latter the central role in the understanding of the actions that conform to the present and that may make an other future possible.

5.5 Just-in-Time Versus Everyday Life

The theme of verticalities and horizontalities can admit numerous reinterpretations, some of them revealing the contradictory relation between these two categories. One of these interpretations deals with the true opposition that exists between the nature of just-in-time activities, which works along a universal clock moved by universal surplus value, and the reality of the activities that together constitute everyday life.

In the former case, there is an inclination toward a single rationalization, chief amongst all the others, that is desirous of homogenization and unification, always intending to take the place of the others. It is a single rationality, but a rationality without reason, which transforms the existence of those that it subordinates through a perspective of alienation. Yet, in everyday life, reason, which is to say the reason for life, is aimed at the middle of what, in the face of this hegemonic rationality, is considered as irrationality. What really exists, though, are other forms of being rational.

The world of real time, of just-in-time, is that subsystem of total reality that searches for its logic in this so-called single rationality, the creation of which is limited, though, since it is an attribute of fewer agents. The world of everyday life is at the same time that of the endless production of other rationalities. These rationalities are, indeed, as diverse as the areas in question, since they host all the modalities of existence.

The functioning of hegemonic spaces supposes a desperate demand for rules. An eventual change in circumstances does not imply a less desperate demand for rules, since such a change also requires regulating norms in order to change. Such regulation obeys the considerations of privatist interests. On the other hand, everyday life supposes a desperate demand for Politics, the result of the joint consideration of multiple interests.

In the case of just-in-time activities, only one temporality is considered. This single temporality is, indeed, the formula of survival in the world of competitiveness on the global scale. As such, only one existence, that of hegemonic agents, is at the same time the origin and the finality of action. Everyday life, on the other hand, encompasses several simultaneously present temporalities, which permits the consideration, in a solitary, side-by-side manner, of the existence of every one and of all as at the same time their origin and finality.

The aforementioned ensemble of conditions permits us to say that the world of real time seeks an impoverishing and limited homogenization, whereas the universe of everyday life is the world of a creative heterogeneity.

5.6 An Entanglement of Techniques: The Realm of Artifice and Scarcity

We know already that the techniques present in a given situation are not homogeneous. The hegemonic techniques, which occur in network, coexist with other techniques. In fact, in a given situation all the techniques present end up being inextricable. Such solidarity does not exactly occur among the techniques themselves, but is a fruit of the solidary life of society.

5.6.1 From Artifice to Scarcity

Today, both objects and actions derive from the technique. The techniques are thus present everywhere: in production, circulation, territory, politics, and culture. They are also—and permanently—present in the body and the spirit of the individual. We all live in an entanglement of techniques, which means, in other words, that we are all immersed in the realm of artifice. To the extent that the hegemonic techniques, founded on science and obedient to the imperatives of market, are heavily endowed today with intentionality, there is an equal tendency toward the hegemony of a ‘rational’ production of things and necessities. Thus, it can be said that there is an exclusionary production of other productions, with the multiplication of strictly programmed technical objects. The multiplication of such objects makes space for this orgy of things and necessities that impose relations and govern us. A truly tendential totalitarianism of rationality is created—that is, of this hegemonic and dominant rationality—producing from its respective system certain things, services, relations, and ideas. This dominant rationality is, indeed, the primary basis of the production of needs and scarcity, inasmuch as a considerable portion of society cannot have access to things, services, relations, and ideas that are multiplied in the foundations of the hegemonic rationality.

The contemporary situation reveals, among other things, three tendencies: 1. an accelerated and artificial production of necessities; 2. a limited incorporation of ways of life said to be rational; and 3. an unlimited production of shortages and scarcity.

In this situation, techniques, velocity, and power create inequalities and, simultaneously, necessities, since satisfaction is not available for all. It is not that the necessary production is globally impossible, but that what is actually produced—necessarily or unnecessarily—is unequally distributed. The result is the feeling and,

then, the conscience of scarcity: that thing that I lack, but that the better-situated other owns. This idea comes from Sartre, who affirms that ‘there is not enough for everybody’. That is why the other consumes and I do not. Individuals—and each individual—are, after all, defined by the sum of their possibilities, but also by the sum of their impossibilities.

The realm of necessity exists for everyone, but in different forms, which we simplify according to two ideal situations: ‘owners’ and ‘not owners’.

Concerning ‘owners’, the escape and overcoming (even if only in the provisional sense) of scarcity becomes feasible through real possibilities or renewed artifices. Since the process of the creation of necessities is infinite, a permanent re-adaptation imposes itself. With the routine of absence and satisfaction, a vicious cycle is created. In truth, absence is already created as the expectation and perspective of satisfaction for this sector of society. Negotiation in order to reach the status of satisfied consumer leads to the repetition of successful experiences. In this way, the portion of habitual consumers obtain a relatively pacific coexistence with scarcity. However, the permanent pursuit of finite goods, consequently condemned to depletion (and substitution by other finite goods), condemns the apparently victorious to accept the counter-finality contained in things and therefore also the deterioration of individuality.

Concerning the ‘non-owners’, their relation with scarcity is conflicted and even warlike. For them, living in the sphere of consumption is like trying to go up on a descending escalator. Each day presents a new experience of scarcity and, because of this, there is no place for rest; life itself ends up becoming a true battlefield. There is no possible negotiation for the ‘non-owners’ in the daily struggle for survival and, individually, there is no negotiating power. Survival is only guaranteed because experiences are necessarily renovated. Moreover, as surprise becomes routine, the richness of ‘non-owners’ is indeed the readiness of the senses. It is with this power that they exempt themselves from counter-finalities and cultivate, alongside the search for finite material goods, the quest for infinite goods such as solidarity and liberty: the more these goods spread themselves, the more intense they become.

5.6.2 From Scarcity to Understanding

The experience of scarcity is the bridge between the lived everyday life and the world. It therefore constitutes a fundamental instrument in the perception of one’s situation and the possibility of expanding one’s consciousness.

Our time consecrates the multiplication of the sources of scarcity, either by the astonishing number of objects present in the market, or by the incessant call to consumption. In this epoch of globalization, a new object is presented each day in order to whet our appetites. The notion of scarcity materializes and deepens itself, but at the same time is reinterpreted on a daily basis by those who are exposed to it, since each day is a day of new scarcity. In this manner, the current society creates

unsatisfied desires, by way of the market and publicity that nevertheless demand explanations. One could say that such a movement repeats itself, invigorating the intellectual process.

The scarcity of one can resemble the scarcity of the other, and today's scarcity can resemble the scarcity of yesterday. However, when scarcity is not satisfied, it ends up imposing itself as the scarcity of yesterday or of the other. The renewal of novelty reinforces both alterity and individuality. The more distinguished those who coexist in a limited space are, the greater the number of ideas of the world to be raised and considered, and therefore the richer either the silent or noisy debate that is established. In this sense, it can be said that the city is a privileged place for such revelations and that, in this period of globalization, the contemporary acceleration is also an acceleration in the production of scarcity and in the discovery of its reality. By multiplying and hastening contacts, the contemporary acceleration makes evident the multiplicity of contemporary scarcity's forms. These forms are changing with increasing speed in order to become more numerous and diverse. For the poor, scarcity is a permanent given of existence. However, as the presence of scarcity in everyday life is a result of an equally permanent metamorphosis, work ends up being, for them, the place of a daily discovery and of a daily struggle, but also a bridge between necessity and the understanding (M. Santos, *Jornal do Brasil*, 06.04.1977).

5.7 The Role of the Poor in the Production of the Present and the Future

The analysis of the role of the poor in the production of the present and the future requires, in the first place, a distinction between poverty and misery. Misery ends up being a total privation, annihilating, or nearly annihilating, the self. Poverty is a situation of penury, but also of struggle, a lively state, of active life, in which a coming into consciousness is possible.

Miserable are those who admit their defeat. But the poor do not give up. They discover each day new forms of working and fighting. This way, they confront their troubles and look for solutions to them. In this condition of constant vigilance, they are not permitted any intellectual rest. Memory would be their enemy. The legacy of the past is marked by the feeling of urgency, this consciousness of the new, which is also a motor of knowledge.

Urban sociality can escape its interpreters in the universities, or their watchmen at the police stations. Nevertheless, it does not escape the active actors of the drama, especially when they are obliged to fight every single day in order to keep living. There are those who describe the framework of this battle as if it were a play in the theatre, when one invokes, for instance, expressions such as strategies of survival. In reality, though, this stage, with its actors, constitutes the very concrete life of the greater part of the population. The city, ready to confront its epoch from its space,

creates and recreates a culture with the marks of its time and space, whether agreeing or disagreeing with the 'owners of time', who are also the owners of space.

It is in this way that, in the coexistence with necessity and with the other, a politics is elaborated, the politics of 'those from below' produced through their visions of the world and of places. It is a new type of politics that is entirely divorced from institutional politics. The latter is founded on features such as the ideology of the growth of globalization, and is oriented by the calculations of political parties and companies. The politics of the poor is based on the everyday life shared by all, poor and not poor, and is nourished by the simple necessity of continuing to exist. In the places, both forms of politics meet and confound themselves; hence, the simultaneous presence of contradictory behaviours, nurtured by the ideology of consumption. This ideology, which is in the service of hegemonic economic forces, also penetrates into the lives of the poor, creating desires in them that are impossible to satisfy.

In such a complex world, the systemic understanding of the world can escape to the poor. The world appears to the poor as something nebulous, constituted by near and distant causes, by concrete and abstract motivations, by the confusion between discourses and situations, between the explanation of things and their propaganda.

However, such facts as the demands that were not satisfied, the neighbour who thrives, and the contradictions of everyday life may perhaps trigger an awakening. In the first moment, this is only the encounter of a few fragments, of some pieces of the puzzle. It is difficult for the poor to access the labyrinth, since they lack the systemic comprehension of the world, the country, and the place. Nevertheless, the seed of understanding is already sown and the next step is its flourishing in acts of non-conformity and even rebellion.

Without a doubt, an individual manifestation of discontentment may not form a chain reaction. In any case, the movements of the masses do not always result from clear and well-articulated discourses and do not always occur by way of consequent and structured organizations. The systematic understanding of situations and the corresponding systemism of the manifestations of non-conformity are normally a slow process. But this does not impede the fact that, in the heart of society, there are already volcanoes emerging here and there, even if they still appear silent and dormant.

In reality, the organizations and structured movements are one thing. The everyday life itself, as a flexible tangle of relations capable of adapting to constantly-moving new circumstances, is another. Organization is important as the instrument of aggregation and multiplication of related but separate forces. It can also constitute the necessary medium of negotiation that is necessary for conquering steps and finding a new baseline of resistance and struggle. However, the achievement of results, regardless of how rewarding they may appear, should neither stimulate the crystallization of the movement, nor encourage the repetition of strategies and tactics. The organized movements should imitate people's everyday life, the flexibility and adaptability of which assures them an authentic existential pragmatism and constitutes their richness and the main source of veracity.

5.8 The Metamorphosis of the Middle Classes

Each epoch produces new actors and attributes new roles to those who already exist. This is the case of the Brazilian middle classes, now challenged to accomplish an important historic task, in the reconstitution of the national political framework.

5.8.1 *The Golden Age*

The so-called Brazilian economic miracle¹ brought along with it the expansion of the influence of the middle class on a country-wide scale. Among the several ‘explosions’ typical of the period, there is this continuous growth of the middle classes, first in the large cities and then in the smaller cities and in the modernized agricultural field. During this half-century period, the explosion of the middle classes follows the demographic explosion, the urban explosion, and the explosion of consumption and credit. Such a group of phenomena has a structural connection to the increase of agricultural and industrial production, as well as to the growth of commerce, transportation, exchanges of all sort, public works, and of administration and the necessity of information. At the same time, there is an expansion and diversification of employment, with the diffusion of new tertiary sector activities and the consolidation, in many areas of the country, of a small working class bourgeoisie. As capitalist modernization, which is always selective, leads to an emptying of the countryside, a significant portion of those who head toward the cities are unable to participate in the upper circuit of the economy, regular salaried workers not included. These disenfranchised workers can only find jobs in the lower circuit of the economy, improperly termed ‘informal’.

It is worth noticing that during the Brazilian miracle, and even during much of the nineteen-eighties, the middle class enlarged and developed itself without the existence of a true competition within itself for the use of resources. Offered by the market or by the state, these resources were aimed at improving the economic power and material well-being of the middle classes. Everybody was going up together, but to different floors. In any case, all the members of the middle classes were aware of their social ascension and hopeful of achieving even more. This explains the relative cohesion of this class and the feeling that they had become a powerful status group. What competition did exist was, in fact, with the poor, a group whose access to resources and services became increasingly difficult insofar as the number of poor people increased significantly. One should remember how easy it was for the middle classes to acquire their own houses by way of the programs of the Brazilian government, while those who were poorer were only

¹T.N.: The Brazilian economic miracle is the term given to the years of exceptional economic growth that occurred in Brazil during the military dictatorship, particularly during the presidency of Emilio Garrastazu Médici (1969–1973).

favoured in the last years of the authoritarian regime, and then only partially. The middle class is the great beneficiary of economic growth, of the political model, and of the urban projects that were put in place.

At the same time that this middle class became more professionally diversified, it experienced the increase of its purchasing power and improved qualitatively, by way of the educational opportunities that were offered to it. All of this resulted in the enlargement of the middle class's well-being (which is today called quality of life), leading this class to believe that the maintenance of its advantages and perspectives were guaranteed. As Amélia Rosa S. Barreto and Ana Clara T. Ribeiro have shown ("*A dívida da dívida e a classe média*", Lastro, IPPUR, year 3, n. 6, April 1999), 'access to credit is transformed in an attempt to achieve social stability.' Everything that nourished the middle class at the same time gave them a feeling of inclusion in the political and economic system, as well as a feeling of safety, stimulated by the constant measures of public power in their favour. It was in fact a reciprocal exchange, since the middle class constituted a base of support for governmental actions.

In this manner, a middle class was formed that thirsted for material goods, beginning with prosperity, a class that was more attached to consumption than citizenship, a reckless partner of growth and power, with which it confused itself. This explains its tolerance for, if not complicity with, the authoritarian regime. The economic model was more important than the civic model. These were, indeed, necessary objective conditions for economic growth without democracy. When the military regime exhausted its cycle in the eighties, democracy installed itself, though in an incomplete way. This incomplete democracy kept the viciousness of its origin, supporting a representative regime that could be considered false due to the absence of responsible political parties. Following this logic, even the left wing groups were taken to give more importance to electoral concerns and less to properly political pedagogy. The genesis and forms of expansion of the Brazilian middle classes were directly related to the manner in which the political parties behave today.

5.8.2 Scarcity Reaches the Middle Classes

Such a situation tended to change when the middle class began to experience scarcity, which could bring it to reinterpret its situation. In recent years, at first in a slow and sporadic way and now in a more systematic and continued manner, the middle class has experienced difficulties that drove them toward an existential situation that was significantly different from that which it experienced a few years ago. Such difficulties occurred all of a sudden: children's education, healthcare, the capacity of purchasing a house or of paying rent, the capacity of affording leisure, the lack of job security, the deterioration of salaries, the negative savings, and the increasing indebtedness. These difficulties are making the middle class uncomfortable with the present and insecure in relation to the future, both remote and

immediate. Such uncertainties are aggravated by the expected reforms to social security, the politics of retirement, private insurance, and labour legislation. Other uncertainties emerge in the context of the home, including youths' anxiety concerning their professional futures, an anxiety that manifests itself on a daily basis.

Since the middle classes can no longer count on the remedies previously offered by the market and the state as a solution for their individual emergent problems, they are beginning to realize that they no longer give the orders, or that they no longer participate in the sharing of power. Accustomed to giving the politicians responsibility for solving their problems, the middle classes now proclaim their discontent and move away from the political debate. These classes no longer feel represented by the political parties, which leads them to become even more disillusioned concerning politics itself. This situation is justified in part by the vision of the impudent consumer that the middle class nourished over the decades. Their detachment from the political debate was aggravated by the fragmentation of information and of the interpretation of the social process promoted by the media, television in particular. The certainty of no longer being able to influence politics is reinforced amongst the middle classes, leading them, not infrequently, to react negatively, which is to say, to wish for less politics and less participation, where the proper reaction should be exactly the opposite.

The current experience of scarcity may not immediately lead to the expansion of consciousness, and when it happens, it may not occur in the same way with different persons. Seen schematically, such a process may only focus, in a first moment, on the defense of individual interests. Consumption and material comfort re-emerge as the main motor of a struggle that can then be limited to new manifestations of individualism. It is at a second moment that such claims, the fruits of a more profound reflection, can reach a superior qualitative level, which can only be achieved through a greater understanding of the social process and through a systemic vision of apparently isolated situations. The following step can lead to the decision to participate in a struggle because of the transformation that can result from it, in which the consumer takes on the role of citizen. It does not matter that this movement toward the growth of consciousness is neither generalized, nor similar from person to person, but only that it is installed.

5.8.3 A New Given in Politics

In any case, the Brazilian middle classes, no longer spoiled and now profoundly wounded in their material and spiritual interests, now constitute a new given of social and political life. However, their role will not be complete until they identify themselves with the claims of the poor and thus contribute together to the reorganization and regeneration of political parties, including the progressive ones. Among these, there are many that still accept the temptations of oppositionist triumphalism—always when the occasions present themselves—and surrender to the opportunism of electioneering, limiting themselves to mobilizing only

occasionally. Consequently, they give away their roles as the shapers not only of opinion but also of civic conscience, without each of which a true politics cannot exist in this country.

The Brazilian middle classes, today more educated, and also more materially deprived, now have the historic task of pushing the political parties to complete, in Brazil, the work, only just started, of implanting a democracy that is not only electoral but also economic, politic, and social. The experience of scarcity, a daily revelator of the true situation of each person, is thus a fundamental given in the acceleration of coming into consciousness. In the current Brazilian conditions, the new circumstances can lead the middle classes to force a substantial change in ideology and political practices, a change that includes greater ideological responsibilities and a corresponding political-electoral representativeness of the political parties.

Chapter 6

Transition on the March

6.1 Introduction

The gestation of the new, in history, frequently occurs in a manner that is almost imperceptible to its contemporaries, insofar as its seeds begin to impose themselves when the old is still quantitatively dominant. It is exactly for this reason that the ‘quality’ of the new can pass by unperceived. Yet history characterizes itself as an uninterrupted succession of epochs. This idea of movement and change is inherent to the evolution of humanity. It is in this way that the periods are born, mature, and die.

In the case of the present world, we are conscious of living in a new period. However, the new that we more easily apprehend is related to the formidable resources of the technique and of science utilized by the new forms of big capital, which is supported by equally new institutional forms. It cannot be said that globalization is similar to previous waves of history, nor even a continuation of that which came before, precisely because the conditions of its realization are radically different. It is only now that humanity can rely on this new quality of the technique, provided by what will be termed the informational technique. We have just arrived at another century and humanity, by way of the advances of science, produces a system of techniques presided over by informational techniques. These techniques come to play the role of a link amongst others, uniting them and assuring the planet-wide presence of this new technical system.

Nevertheless, in order to understand the process that led to the current globalization, it is necessary to take two fundamental elements into account: the state of the techniques and the state of politics. Frequently, there is a tendency to separate one thing from the other, which explains why many interpretations of history are born from the analysis of techniques or politics exclusively. In truth, there never was, in human history, a separation between the two things. History provides the material frame and politics molds the conditions that permit action. In social practice, technical systems and systems of action are confounded, and it is by way

of the possible combinations of these two systems, and from the choice of the moments and places of their use, that history and geography are made and remade continually.

6.2 Popular Culture, Popular Period

For the greater part of humanity, the process of globalization ends up having an influence, direct or indirect, over all the aspects of existence: economic life, cultural life, interpersonal relations, and subjectivity itself. However, this process does not appear in a homogeneous manner, be it in extension or in depth. Moreover, the very fact that the process of globalization creates scarcity is one of the reasons for the impossibility of homogenization. Individuals are not affected equally by this phenomenon, the diffusion of which encounters obstacles in the diversity of people and places. In reality, globalization aggravates heterogeneity, giving it an even more structural character.

One of the consequences of such an evolution is the new signification of popular culture, which is made capable of rivalling the culture of the masses. Another consequence is the production of the conditions necessary for the resurgence of the masses themselves, pointing to the emergence of a new historical period, which we will call the demographic, or popular, period (M. Santos, *Espaço e sociedade*, 1979).

6.2.1 Mass Culture, Popular Culture

Let us explore the case of culture. A coarse scheme, from an arbitrary classification, would show the widespread presence and influence of a culture of masses searching to homogenize and impose itself upon popular culture. However, the same scheme would show the reactions of this popular culture. There is an initial drive toward unification and homogenization promoted by a blind market that is indifferent to the heritages and present realities of the places and societies. Without a doubt, the market gradually imposes, with greater or lesser force, here and there, the elements more or less significant to mass culture, since mass culture is indispensable to the reign of the market. At the same time, the market also imposes the expansion of the forms of economic, financial, technical, and cultural globalization. This conquest, more or less effective according to places and societies, is never complete, since it encounters the resistance of the pre-existing culture. This results in the creation of mixed syncretic forms, between which we find a domesticated popular culture. This culture, offered as a spectacle, adds a legitimate background to exotic forms, forms that bear new techniques.

Yet there is also—and happily—the increasingly frequent possibility of a revenge of popular culture over mass culture. This is true, for example, when popular culture is diffused through the use of instruments that at their origin partake, themselves, in

mass culture. In this case, popular culture exerts its quality of the discourse of ‘those from below’, putting in relief the realities of the poor, of minorities, of the excluded, by way of the exaltation of the everyday life. If here the instruments of mass culture are reutilized, the content is not, for all that, ‘global’. It is also not directed at the so-called global market, since the basis of this popular culture is present in the territory, and in the local and inherited culture. Such expressions of popular culture are at the same time strong and capable of diffusion, and are revealing of what we could term universal regionalisms. These regionalisms are a form of expression that associates the spontaneity typical of popular ingenuity with the search for a universal discourse, a discourse that ends up nourishing politics.

In the end, the question of scarcity once again appears to be central. Those ‘from below’ do not have the means (material or otherwise) to participate fully in modern mass culture. But their culture, being based in the territory, in labour, and in everyday life, gains the force necessary to deform, at the level of the place, the impact of mass culture. When placed together, individuals create culture and, at the same time, a territorialized economy, a territorialized culture, a territorialized discourse, and a territorialized politics. This culture of the neighbourhood values, at the same time, the experience of scarcity, and the experience of conviviality and solidarity. It is in this way that this endogenous culture, generated from within, imposes itself as nourishment upon the politics of the poor, a politics that occurs independently and above parties and organizations. Such a culture materializes according to lower levels of technique, capital, and organization, which explain its particular forms of creating. This lack of means would apparently be a weakness, but in reality it is a force, since it results in an organic integration with the territory of the poor and its human contents. This explains the expressivity of its symbols, manifested in speech, music, and in the wealth of forms of interaction and solidarity between people. All of this evolves in an inseparable way, which assures the permanence of the movement.

Mass culture certainly produces symbols. But these, directly or indirectly in the service of power or the market, are increasingly fixed. In the face of the social movement and having the objective of not appearing antiquated, these symbols are substituted, but with another symbology that is equally fixed: what comes from above is forever dying and can, by anticipation, already be seen as a cadaver from the moment of its birth. This is the ideological symbology of mass culture.

On the other hand, the symbols ‘from below’, products of popular culture, are bearers of the truth of existence and revealing of the very movement of society.

6.2.2 The Empirical Conditions of Transformation

It is from premises like these that a re-emergence of the masses can be thought. In relation to political and economic migrations, two factors must contribute to this re-emergence: the growth of the present calling for the intercontinental and intra-national mixture of peoples, races, religions, tastes, as well as the increasing

tendency toward the agglomeration of people in certain specific places, in other words, this concentrated urbanization revealed in the last twenty years.

From the combination of these two tendencies it can be assumed that the process initiated half a century ago will lead to a colorization of the North, to the ‘informalization’ of part of its economy and social relations, and to the generalization, now even more evident, of a certain dual scheme present in the underdeveloped countries of the South.

Such a society and such a dual urban economy (dual but not dualist) will lead to two intertwined forms of accumulation, two forms of division of labour, and two distinct and associated urban logics, and such pairs will coexist in the same place. The already-glimpsed phenomenon of two divisions of labour, of the top and from below, will tend to reinforce itself. The first holds itself to the obedient use of the techniques of hegemonic rationality, while the second is founded on the quotidian rediscovery of the combinations that make life possible and operate at different degrees of quality and quantity according to the places.

The division of labour from the top creates a solidarity that is generated from outside and is dependent on vertical vectors and frequently distant pragmatic relations. Rationality is maintained at the cost of iron-bound, exclusive, implacable, and radical norms. Without blind obedience there is no efficacy. In the division of labour from below, what is produced is a solidarity created from within and dependent on horizontal vectors cemented on the territory and the local culture. Here are the relations of proximity that loom large; this is the domain of tropical flexibility with the extreme adaptability of its actors, an endogenous adaptability. With each new movement there is a new rebalancing in favour of local society and regulated by it.

The division of labour from the top is a field of greater velocity. In it, the rigidity of economic norms (private and public) impedes politics. From below, there is more intrinsic dynamism, more spontaneous movement, more free encounters, more complexity, more richness (the richness and movement of the slow people¹), and more combinations. All of this produces a new centrality of the social issue, according to the formula suggested by Ana Clara Torres Ribeiro, which also constituted a new basis for the consolidation of the reign of politics.

6.2.3 The Precedence of Humanity and the Popular Period

Another globalization supposes a radical change in the present conditions, in such a manner that the centrality of all actions would be localized in humanity. Without a

¹T.N.: Santos uses the term *homens lentos* (literally ‘slow men’), which we have translated as “slow people,” to refer to those who do not have access to the velocity of the current time. Thus, it refers to the poor and non-hegemonic agents. However, the notion of slowness has no pejorative connotation here, since, according to the author’s theory, this slowness gives these people the capacity to differently contemplate everyday life, putting them in a revolutionary position concerning the future.

doubt, this desired change will occur only at the end of the process, during which successive readjustments will impose themselves.

In the present circumstances, as we have previously seen, the central position is occupied by money in its most aggressive forms, a money in a pure state sustained by an ideological information with which it is found to be in symbiosis. This centrality of money leads to a brutal distortion of the sense of life in all its dimensions, work and leisure included, reaching into the intimate valuation of each person and the very constitution of the geographic space. With the prevalence of money in its pure state as the primary and ultimate motor of actions, humanity ends up being a merely residual element; thus, the territory, the nation-State, and social solidarity also become residual.

The primacy of humanity supposes that it will be placed in the centre of the preoccupations of the world, as a philosophical given and as an inspiration for actions. In such a manner, the empire of compassion in interpersonal relations and the stimulus to social solidarity will be assured. This solidarity is to be exercised between individuals, between the individual and society, and vice-versa, and between society and the state. Consequently, it would reduce social fractures, impose a new ethics, and, thus, place solid foundations for a new society, a new economy, and a new geographic space. The point of departure for thinking about alternatives, then, would be the practice of life and the existence of everyone.

The new social landscape would be a result of the abandonment and overcoming of the present model and its substitution by another, able to guarantee for the greater portion of the people the satisfaction of the essential necessities indispensable for a decent human life. Conversely, manufactured needs, imposed by way of publicity and conspicuous consumption, would be relegated to a secondary position. Thus, social interest would supplant the current precedence of economic interest and would raise both a new agenda of investments and a new hierarchy in public, entrepreneurial, and private spending. Such a scheme would lead, in parallel, to the establishment of new internal relations within each country and also to new international relations. In a world in which the rule of competitiveness as an essential pattern of relationships is abolished, the desire for power would no longer be an end for the behaviour of the states, and the idea of the internal market would become a central preoccupation.

Despite the importance that is being given to the specific relations between great actors, their actions lack further meaning. Consequently, the search for a different future necessarily has to pass by the abandonment of the infernal logics that, within this vitiated rationality, underlie and preside over the current economic practices and hegemonic politics.

The present subordination to the single economic mode has led to giving priority to exports and imports, one of the forms with which the so-called global market materializes. That, however, has consequently brought a low quality of life to all the countries and to the majority of the population, and the growth of the number of poor across the continents. This is so because, given the present globalization, social policies that in the recent past supported the less-favoured were left aside under the argument that social means and public money must firstly be utilized to

facilitate the incorporation of countries in the globalitarian wave. But, if the central preoccupation is humanity, such a model will not have more reason to exist.

6.3 The Centrality of the Periphery

The idea of the irreversibility of the current globalization is apparently enhanced each time we note the present inter-relation between each country and what we call the 'world'. This alleged irreversibility is also present when we verify the now unquestionable interdependence between world history and particular histories. Moreover, this notion also has to do with the idea, equally established, that history would exclusively issue from the central countries, that is, from Europe and the United States. In reality, roughly speaking these central countries are not necessarily discontented with the current state of things.

6.3.1 *Limits to Cooperation*

When we closely observe the more structural aspects of the present situation, however, we verify that the centre of the system seeks to impose a globalization from the top down upon the other countries, while a dispute between Europe, Japan, and the United States reigns at its core. These countries fight to defend and expand their portion of the global market and to affirm economic, political, and military hegemony over the nations that are more directly tributary to them without, nevertheless, abandoning the idea of expanding their own area of influence. So, every fraction of the market, regardless of where, becomes fundamental to the successful competitiveness of the companies. These companies put their forces in action and incite the respective governments to support them. The limit of cooperation between the Triad (the United States, Europe, Japan) is this very same competition, carried out in such a way that each country does not lose ground to the other.

However, since the idea of citizenship is still strong in these countries, it is impossible to neglect the interest of their populations or to suppress entirely the rights acquired through secular struggles. What remains as a memory of the state of well-being suffices to counter the pretensions of complete autonomy of the transnational companies and contributes to the emergence, within each nation, of new contradictions. As the companies tend to exert their will to power on the global plane, the fight between them is aggravated, dragging the countries along in this competition. This is actually a war, carried out as much by the states as by the respective global companies, a war in which the underdeveloped countries also participate, but as weaker partners.

Right now, the experience of the common regional markets already shows the so-called 'emergent' countries that the cooperation of the Triad, together or separately, is more representative of the very interest of the great powers than of a will

toward effective collaboration. In this war, the international organisms captained by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, etc., play a determinant role. This is due to their quality as interpreters of the interests common to the United States, Europe and Japan. Such realities raise doubt about the will of each member, and of the ensemble of these hegemonic actors, to construct a true universalism. We are also led to think, given the present conditions, that this double competition will endure.

6.3.2 *The Challenge to the South*

The underdeveloped countries, increasingly fragile partners in such an unfair game, will sooner or later comprehend that, in this situation, cooperation means to increase their own dependence. As a consequence, a dependent association with the central countries, in the frame of the present globalization, seems to be an unrewarding effort. This globalized world produces a determinant rationality, but one that, little by little, is going to become less dominant. It is a rationality that commands the grand affairs that are more and more comprehensive and increasingly concentrated in fewer hands. These grand affairs are of direct interest to a dwindling number of people and companies. As the greater part of humanity is of direct or indirect interest to these affairs, this reality is little by little unveiled by the poorer countries.

There is, in all of that, a great contradiction. We have abandoned the theories of underdevelopment, the third-worldism that was our banner in the decades of 1950–1960. However, thanks to globalization, something very powerful is resurfacing: the history of the greater part of humanity leads to the recognition of the survival of this *third-worldization* (that somehow also includes part of the population of the rich countries) (Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães, *Quinhentos anos de periferia*, 1999).

It is certain that the coming into consciousness of this structural situation of inferiority will not arrive in all of the underdeveloped countries at the same time. Additionally, it is much less probable that the desire for change concerning this kind of relationship will be synchronic. Nevertheless, it could be admitted that sooner or later the internal conditions of each country, provoked in good part by their external relations, will lead to a revision of the treaties that presently conform to globalization. Thus, there will be a will to detachment and afterward of disengagement, as suggested by Samir Amin, breaking up, in this manner, the unity of obedience that is predominant today. Yoked beneath the weight of an external debt that they cannot pay, the underdeveloped countries witness the incessant creation of shortages and ranks of poor. Forced to transfer means that should be destined for the social space to the economic sector, these countries are finally beginning to recognize their present situation of ingovernability.

In truth, the manifestations of discomfort concerning the consequences of the new dependence and of the new imperialism are already very numerous (Reinaldo Gonçalves, *Globalização e desnacionalização*, 1999). The limits of acceptance of such a situation are now evident. For different reasons and by various means, the manifestations of irredentism are already clearly evident in countries like Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan, but also in Malaysia, and Pakistan. Also to be added to this list are particular forms of inclusion of India and China in the current globalization, forms which are not simplistically obedient or conformist to this globalization, as Western propaganda wants to make us believe. Countries like China and India, with a third of the world population and an international presence that is increasingly active, will hardly accept playing the passive role of market-nation for the economically hegemonic blocs. The same is true in the case of Russia. Thus, a chain reaction will be able to give rise to the rebirth of something like the old third-world *élan*, such as President Nyerere, of Tanzania, suggested in his book *The Challenge to the South*.

Beyond this likely tendency, it is important to consider the forms of the disorder of social life that are already multiplying in numerous countries and that are tending to grow. Brazil is an emblematic example; however, we do not know until when it will be possible to maintain the globalitarian economic model and at the same time to soothe the growing unsatisfied populations.

The central powers (the United States, Europe, Japan), despite their competition for control of the global market, have common interests that will oblige them to attempt to adapt their rules of conviviality to the pretension of maintaining hegemony. As, nonetheless, the present globalization is a period of permanent crisis, the renovation of the hegemonic role of the Triad will lead to greater sacrifices for the rest of the community of nations, thus incentivizing the search for other solutions in these countries.

The hegemonic combination that produces the modern economic forms differently affects the various countries, various cultures, and diverse areas within a country. The current socio-geographic diversity exemplifies this process. Its reality reveals a selective globalizing movement, with the greater part of the planet's population being less directly affected—and in certain cases barely affected—by the present economic globalization. In Asia, in Africa, and even in Latin America, local life manifests itself both as an answer and a reaction to this globalization. With these majoritarian populations being unable to consume the globalized West in its pure forms (financial, economic and cultural), their respective countries end up being the places where globalization is relativized or refused.

One thing appears certain: the changes to be introduced in order to achieve an other globalization will not come from the centre of the system, as occurred in other moments of rupture in the march of capitalism. In reality, the changes will issue from the underdeveloped countries.

It is expected that the systemism in which the present globalization operates will appear as an obstacle and make the manifestation of the will for disengagement

more difficult. However, this will not prevent each country from developing alternative models from their own characteristics, nor will it prohibit the existence of horizontal associations between equally hegemonized neighbour countries. Regional blocs will now have a new meaning and the stage of merely commercial relations will be surpassed in order to reach a more elevated stage of cooperation. So, a globalization constituted from below upward, in which the search for inclusion within the powerful countries will no longer be the goal, may allow preoccupations of social, cultural, and moral order to prevail.

6.4 The Active Nation, the Passive Nation

The present globalization and the brutal forms that it adopted to impose changes lead to an urgent need to review what to make with things, ideas, and also with words. Whatever the debate, today, it reclaims the clear and coherent exposure of its terms, without which it could easily fall into the void or into ambiguity. This is the case of the national debate itself, requiring new definitions and a renovated vocabulary. As always, the country must be seen as a moving structural situation in which each element is intimately related to the others.

6.4.1 The End of the National Project?

Now, however, in the world of globalization, it is becoming difficult to recognize this structure, the same way that the visualization of a national project can become obscure. Perhaps that is why the projects of the great companies, imposed by the tyranny of finance and trumpeted by the media, end up guiding the evolution of the countries in one way or another. This is carried out in agreement or not with the public bodies, which are frequently gentle and subservient. Consequently, the design of a geopolitics specific to each nation and that takes its characteristics and interests into account is left aside.

Thus, the notions of national destiny and the national project frequently yield the stage to minor, pragmatic, and immediatist preoccupations. This is because, by the reasons just exposed, national political parties rarely present platforms driven by clear political and social objectives and that express a comprehensive vision (Cesar Benjamin et al. *A opção brasileira*, 1998). The idea of history, direction, and destiny is diminished in the name of the achievement of statistical goals whose only preoccupation is to conform before the determinations of the present process of globalization. This explains the multiplication of imbalances and structural distortions, causing even more fragmentation and inequality. The more open and obedient the countries, the more serious these problems will be.

6.4.2 *Alienation of the Active Nation*

Let us take the case of Brazil. It is more than a simple metaphor to think that one of the ways to approach the question would consider the existence within the nation, in fact, of two nations: an active nation and a passive nation. Since national finances are globalized—and globalizing!—the grand irony is that it is the nation that blindly obeys the globalitarian design that is now considered to be active, while, from this point of view, the rest end up being considered passive nations. According to such postulates, the active nation would be one of those agents who accept, preach, and direct a modernization that gives pre-eminence to the adjustments that are of interest to money, while the passive nation would be made up of all the rest.

Thus, are these expressions truly suitable? Or should we, in reality, call the active nation passive, and vice versa?

The so-called active nation, in other words, that which attends effectively to national and international finances, serves the interests of international bourgeoisie and the associated national bourgeoisie. It is true, also, that its globalized discourse, in order to have local effectiveness, requires a domestic accent and therefore stimulates an associated national thought produced by captive minds, subsidized or otherwise. The so-called active nation nourishes its action with the prevalence of an ideological system that defines the ideas of prosperity and of wealth and, at the same time, the production of conformity. The ‘active nation’ seems fluid, rapid, externally articulated, but, at the same time, entropic and internally disarticulated. Is it, indeed, dynamic? As this idea is very widespread, it must be remembered that velocity is not necessarily dynamism. Moreover, this movement is not intrinsic to a nation, but is attributed, borrowed from an external motor; it is not genuine, has no finality, and is devoid of teleology. It is a blind agitation, an equivocated project, a dynamism of the devil.

6.4.3 *Coming into Consciousness and Richness of the Passive Nation*

The so-called passive nation is constituted by the larger part of the population and economy, those who merely participate in a residual way in the global market or whose activities can survive at the margin, without, however, being fully considerate in the public accounting or in official statistics. The understanding of the reality of the actors of the passive nation must come from the thought elaborated by the public intellectual engaged in the defense of the interests of the majority.

The activities of this passive nation are frequently marked by the contradiction between the practical demand of conformity, that is, the necessity to participate directly or indirectly in the dominant rationality, and the dissatisfaction and non-conformity of its actors in the face of always-limited results. The quotidian

encounter with a situation of inferiority, now made permanent, strengthens the notion of scarcity in its participants and summons forth a reinterpretation of the condition of the individual in the place, the country, and the world.

The 'passive nation' is statistically slow, glued to rugosities² of its geographic milieu. It is thus organic and locally rooted. Moreover, this is also the nation that maintains relations of symbiosis with the immediate surroundings. These are quotidian relations that create, spontaneously and counter-currently, an authentic, endogenous and resistant culture that constitutes a foundation, a solid basis for the production of a politics. This passive nation *dwells*, there where it lives and evolves, while the other nation only circulates, utilizing places like more of a resource at its service, but without deeper commitment.

At a first moment, disarticulated by the 'active nation', the 'passive nation' cannot launch an inclusive project. Incidentally, the empire of immediate interests that manifest themselves in the pragmatic exercise of life contribute, undoubtedly, to such a disarticulation. But, at a second moment, the coming into consciousness brought about by the rootedness of the passive nation in the environment and, above all, by its experience of scarcity, enables the production of a project whose viability comes from the fact that the so-called passive nation is formed by the greater part of the population. In addition, the passive nation is endowed with its own, authentic dynamism, based on its own existence; hence, its veracity and richness.

In this manner, we can affirm that what is also known, through globalization's game of mirrors, as the active nation is actually the passive nation, while what is by the same parameters considered the passive nation constitutes, even in the present, but above all through the lens of the future, the true active nation. Consequently, the emergence of the passive nation will be more viable, rapid, and effective if the confluence of the modes of existence and of the labour of the respective actors, as well as the profound unity of its destiny, is taken into account.

Here, the role of intellectuals will be, perhaps, much more than to promote a simple combat against the forms of being of the 'active nation'—in the present circumstances an important but insufficient task—but should strive to show, analytically, in the national context, the systemic life of the passive nation and its manifestations of resistance to an indiscriminate and totalitarian conquest of the social space by the so-called active nation. Such a renovated vision of the contradictory reality of each fraction of territory must be offered up for the reflection of society in general, as much to society organized along the lines of associations, unions, churches, and political parties, as to disorganized society. They will find in this new interpretation the elements necessary for the postulation and exercise of an other politics, more consistent with the interests of society.

²T.N.: Santos borrows the term 'rugosity' from geomorphology and applies it to human geography, reinterpreting it as the forms and structures that were produced by humanity in the past, in a different political, economic, or cultural context, but which persist in the current landscape.

6.5 The Present Globalization Is Not Irreversible

The present globalization is much less a product of the ideas currently possible and much more the result of a restrictive ideology that was intentionally established. We have already seen that all the present realizations, deriving from hegemonic actions, have as their foundations intellectual constructions fabricated even before the fabrication of things and the decisions to act. The intellectualization of social life that has recently been achieved is accompanied by a strong ideologization.

6.5.1 *The Dissolution of Ideologies*

Nevertheless, what we are now observing everywhere is a tendency toward the dissolution of these ideologies in the confrontation with the lived experience of peoples and individuals. The very financial creed, seen through the lens of the economic system to which it gave rise, or examined separately in each country, appears less acceptable and, in being contested, other elements of the ideology of the single thought lose force.

Beyond the multiple forms with which the discourse of globalization underpins the hegemonic actions of the states, companies, and international institutions in the current historical period, the role of ideology in the production of things and the ideological role of objects that surround us contribute, together, to the aggravation of this sense that there is now no other *future* but that which would come as an *enlarged present*, and not as another thing. Thus, the result is the heavy wave of conformism and inaction that characterizes our time, contaminating the youth and, until now, a great number of intellectuals.

The idea according to which the process and present form of globalization would be irreversible is very widespread. This also has to do with the force with which the phenomenon reveals and establishes itself in all the places and in all spheres of life, leading to the thought that there are no alternatives to the present state of things.

However, this repetitive vision of the world confuses what was already done in the past with what can still be done in the future. To exorcize this risk, we must consider that the world is not only formed by that which already exists (here, there, everywhere), but by what can actually exist (here, there, everywhere). The dated world of today must be discerned as what it really brings us, that is, a conjunction of real, concrete possibilities that are completely feasible under determined conditions.

The world as defined by the official literature of the single thought is just the conjunction of particular forms of realization of only a certain number of possibilities. However, a true world will be defined from the complete list of present possibilities at a certain date and that include not only what already exists on the face of the Earth, but also what does not even exist, but is empirically feasible. Such

possibilities, still unrealized, are (in a certain way) already present as a tendency or as the promise of realization. Consequently, situations like the ones we are experiencing now appear definitive, but are not truly eternal.

6.5.2 *The Pertinence of Utopia*

It is only from this finding, founded on the true history of our time, that it becomes possible to rekindle, in a concrete manner, the idea of utopia and of the project. This will be the result of the conjunction of two types of values. On the one hand, there are the fundamental, essential values that founded humankind, valid at any time and place, such as liberty, dignity, and happiness; on the other hand, contingent values arise, due to the history of the present, that is, to current history. The density and historical feasibility of the project, today, depends on the manner by which we undertake the combination of these values.

Thus, it is permissible to say that there are many possible futures; and they will result in different arrangements, according to our degree of consciousness, between the kingdom of possibilities and the kingdom of the will. This is how initiatives will be articulated and obstacles will be overcome, allowing us to counter the force of dominant structures, be they present or inherited. The identification of the stages and the adjustments to undertake along the way will depend on the necessary clarity of the project.

As we have already mentioned, some givens of the present now open us to the perspective of a different future. These givens include: the tendency toward a generalized mixture between peoples; the drive toward a concentrated urbanization; the weight of ideology in the present historical constructions; the 'relative' and absolute impoverishment of populations and the loss of quality of life of the middle classes; the degree of relative 'docility' of the contemporary techniques; the 'generalized politicization' permitted by the excess of norms (María Laura Silveira, *Um país, uma região. Fim de século e modernidades na Argentina*, 1999); and the possible realization of humankind with the great transformation that emerges.

Let us also recall that one of the elements, at the same time ideological and empirically existential, of the present form of globalization is the centrality of consumption. Indeed, everyday life and its repercussions on production, the present forms of existence, and the perspectives of the people, all have much to do with consumption. But the current unstable labour relations, the expansion of unemployment and the decline of median incomes constitute a contrast in relation to the multiplication of objects and services, all of which thus becomes harder to access. At the same time, even traditional consumption ends up being difficult or impossible for a large portion of the population. It is as if the spell has turned against the sorcerer.

This recreation of necessity within a world of abundant things and services reaches more and more of the middle class. Notably, the definition of middle class today is being renewed, insofar as this class is now beginning to suffer the

experience of scarcity, as we have already seen. This is a given relevant to understanding the change in visibility of the history that is currently being processed. In such a manner, the visions offered by ostensive advertising or by the ideology contained in objects and discourses are opposed to the visions offered by existence. It is through this set of movements that a saturation of pre-constructed symbols is recognized and that the limits of tolerance to ideology are surpassed, which allows the enlargement of consciousness.

In the current conditions, this evolution can seem impossible, since the solutions until now proposed are still imprisoned to that vision according to which the single dynamism possible is that of the great economy, a dynamism based on the claims of the financial system. For example, the efforts to re-establish employment are directed, above all, if not exclusively, to the upper circuit of the economy. But this is not the only possible path, and according to the political-ideological orientation of those responsible, other remedies can be found. These remedies must take into account a division of labour coming 'from below', a phenomenon typical of the underdeveloped countries (M. Santos, *O espaço dividido*, 1978), but which today is also verified in the so-called developed world.

On the other hand, insofar as techniques are increasingly presenting themselves as norms and life unfolds on the inside of an ocean of techniques, we end up undergoing a generalized politicization. The rapidity of the processes leads to a rapidity of changes and, consequently, deepens the necessity of production of new organizing beings. This occurs at the different levels of social life. Nothing of relevance is done without norms. At this end of the twentieth century, everything is politics. Furthermore, thanks to the techniques utilized in the contemporary period and to the centralizing role of hegemonic, global agents, the presence of processes that are distorted and require reordering is becoming ubiquitous. For that reason, politics appears as an indispensable and omnipresent given, practically covering the totality of actions.

We witnessed, then, the empire of norms, but also the conflict between them, including the increasingly dominant role of private norms in the production of the public sphere. It is not uncommon that the rules established by companies affect more than the rules created by the state. All of this extends to and bewilders individuals, producing an atmosphere of insecurity and even fear. However, the same process leads those who do not succumb entirely to the empire of norms to the search for consciousness in relation to the destiny of the Planet and, soon, of Humanity.

6.5.3 Other Possible Uses for the Current Techniques

The technical systems upon which the current hegemonic actors rely are being utilized to reduce the scope of human life on the planet. However, never in history were there systems so conducive to facilitate life and to proportion the happiness of humanity. The materiality that the world of globalization is recreating permits a

radically different use of that which had been the material basis of industrialization and imperialism.

The technique of machines required massive investments, according to the massiveness and concentration of capital and of the technical system itself. As a consequence, operations were physically and morally inflexible, leading to a limited, directed use of intelligence and creativity. Conversely, the computer, symbol of the techniques of information, reclaims only a small amount of fixed capital, since its use is more demanding of intelligence. The necessary investment can be fragmented, which makes possible the adaptation of the techniques of information to more diverse means. One could even speak of the emergence of a new type of artisanship, served by swift instruments of production and distribution.

It can even be said, then, that the computer reduces—tendentially—the effect of the alleged law according to which technical innovation leads to an economic concentration. The new instruments, by their very nature, are able to disseminate themselves throughout the social body, overcoming the pre-existing socioeconomic cleavages.

Under favourable political conditions, the materiality symbolized by the computer is capable not only of assuring the liberation of inventiveness but also of making it effective. The non-necessity, in complex and socioeconomically unequal societies, of widely adopting computers of the latest generation will also avoid the risk of aggravating distortions and imbalances. Furthermore, the idea of cultural distance, subjacent to the theory and practice of imperialism, also reaches its limit. Contemporary techniques are easier to invent, imitate, or reproduce than those that preceded them.

The families of techniques emergent at the end of the twentieth century—combining computers and electronics, above all—offer the possibility of overcoming the imperative of hegemonic technology and, at the same time, of allowing the proliferation of new arrangements, with the re-emergence of creativity. In fact, this is already occurring in the areas of society in which the division of labour is produced from below upward. Here, the production, use, and diffusion of the new are no longer monopolized by an increasingly concentrated form of capital. These processes now belong to the dominion of the greater number, finally enabling the emergence of a genuine world of intelligence. This way, the technique can return to being the result of the encounter between human ingenuity and a specific portion of nature—more and more modified—permitting this relation to be founded in the virtualities of the geographical and social environment, in a way that assures the restoration of humanity in its essence.

6.5.4 Geography and the Acceleration of History

Geography itself appears to contribute to the acceleration of history. In the city—above all in the large city—the effects of neighbourhood seem to impose a greater possibility of identification of situations, thanks, also, to the improvement of the

information available and to the deepening of the possibilities of communication. This way, it becomes possible to identify, in material life as in the intellectual order, the abandonment to which the populations are relegated. This abandonment leads to both a greater recognition of the condition of scarcity and new possibilities of the enlargement of consciousness.

From these effects of neighbourhood, the re-strengthened individual could, at a later moment, surpass its search for consumption, and surrender to the search for citizenship. The first supposes a limited and unidirectional vision, while the second includes the elaboration of comprehensive and systematic visions. In the first case, what is pursued is the reconstruction of the material and juridical conditions that allow the strengthening of individual (or familial) wellbeing without, however, showing the preoccupation with the strengthening of individuality. From another perspective, the search for citizenship will point to the reform of practices and of political institutions.

Against this new reality, population agglomerations will be valorized as the place of human density and, because of this, the place of a dynamic cohabitation. It will also be in these agglomerations, then, through the same lens, that the rebirth and the burden of popular culture will be observed. On the other hand, precariousness and poverty, which is to say, the impossibility of fully enjoying, due to lack of resources, the material offerings of modernity may equally inspire solutions that lead to the desire and possible rebirth, today, of techniques. This will lead to the conscious and imaginative use, in each place, of every type of offered technology and of every modality of labour. The fact that contemporary techniques now have a degree of 'docility' will contribute to this situation which, contrary to the last historical period, is now a concrete historical fact. These 'docile' techniques now present themselves as being more conducive to the liberation of efforts, to the exercise of inventiveness, and to the blooming and multiplication of social and individual demands.

Although the realization of history through the vectors 'from above' is still dominant, the realization of another history through the vectors 'from below' has become possible. The mixture of peoples, races, cultures, religions, tastes, etc. will contribute to this realization from below in all countries. The agglomeration of people in reduced spaces due to the phenomenon of concentrated urbanization, typical of the last quarter of the twentieth century, and the changes in the relations of labour, together with growing unemployment and the decline of salaries, display aspects that may be positive in the near future, when the metamorphoses of informal labour will also be lived as the expansion of free labour. Those implicated in this new free labour will have new possibilities for interpreting the world and the place. In addition, they will also be capable of comprehending the respective position of each individual in the world and place.

The present conditions equally allow us to anticipate a transformation in the media under the pressure of local situations (production, consumption, culture). The media works with something that it transforms into an object of the market, which is to say, people. If media takes into account that communities are never formed by homogeneous peoples, it will no longer represent only the common sense imposed

by the single thought. As long as the economic, social, and political processes produced from below upward can develop effectively, a veritable information may take place within the majority of the population and in the service of an imaginative and emotional communication, thus assigning a role diametrically opposed to what is today conferred to the system of the media.

6.5.5 *A Possible New World*

These metamorphoses permit us to foresee the local production of a progressive understanding of the world and of the place, with the indigenous production of images, discourses, philosophies, together with the elaboration of a new *ethos* and of new ideologies and new political beliefs. These ideologies and political beliefs would be supported by the resurrection of the idea and practice of solidarity.

Today's world also authorizes another perception of history by way of the contemplation of the empirical universality, which is constituted with the emergence of new planetarized techniques and the new possibilities they open up. The dialectic between this empirical universality and the particularities will encourage the overcoming of the inverted praxis, up to now commanded by the dominant ideology. This dialectic will also incite the possibility of surpassing the kingdom of necessity, opening up a place for utopia and hope. In the present historical conditions, this new way of seeing globalization will allow one to distinguish, within the totality, between what already exists as a established fact and what is possible, but not yet carried out. Both situations, though, will be seen as one unitary form. Let us remember the lesson of A. Schmidt (*The concept of nature in Marx*, 1971) who said that reality is, furthermore, all of that which we have not yet become, in other words, all of that which we ourselves project as human beings, by the intermediary of myths, choices, decisions, and of struggles.

The crisis that is faced by today's system, in different countries and continents, puts on display not only the perversity of such a system, but also its weakness. That, as we saw, is already leading to the discrediting of the dominant discourses, even if another discourse, of criticism and proposition, has not yet been elaborated systematically.

The process of coming into consciousness—as we have already seen—is not homogeneous, neither according to places, nor to social classes or professional situations, nor to individuals. The speed with which each person appropriates the truth contained in history is different, as is the profundity and consistency of this appropriation. The individual discovery is already a considerable step forward, even though it can appear a laborious path to its carrier because of the resistances to this new mode of thought. The next step is the achievement of a systemic vision, that is, the possibility to see the situations and active causes as an ensemble and to localize them as a whole, showing their interdependency. From this, the silent discussion of the individual with himself and the more or less public debate with other people gain a new clarity and density. This will allow one to see the relations of cause and

effect as a continuous flow, in which each situation is included in a dynamic and structured network, on the world scale and on the scale of places.

It is from this systemic vision that the notions of world and place encounter, interpenetrate, and complete themselves, allowing the understanding of how each place, and also each thing, each person, each relation, and so on depends on the world.

Such reasonings authorize a critical view of the history in which we live, which includes a philosophical appreciation for our own situation in the face of the community, the nation, the planet, together with a new appreciation for our own role as person. It is in this way that, even from the notion of what it is to be a consumer, we will be able to achieve the idea of the integral person and of the citizen. This radical reevaluation of the individual will contribute to the qualitative renewal of the human species, serving as the foundation of a new civilization.

The vertical reconstruction of the world, such as the current perverse globalization is realizing, seeks to impose common norms of existence upon all of the countries, at the same time and rapidly, if possible. But this is not definitive. The evolution that we are glimpsing will have its acceleration in different moments and in different countries, and will be made possible by the emergence of the crisis.

This new, foreseen world will not be a construction from the top down, as we are witnessing and deploring today, but an edification whose trajectory is going to be given from the bottom upward.

The conditions enumerated above will allow the implantation of a new economic, social, and political model that leads to the realization of a collective solidarity life by means of a new distribution of goods and services. Running from the scale of the place to that of the planet, this model will assure a reformulation of the world through the intermediation of another manner of doing globalization.

6.6 The Story Is Just Beginning

Contrary to much of what has been said, we are not at the end of history; it is only just beginning. In the past, there was a history of places, regions, countries, and so on. Histories could be, at the maximum, continental, in function of the empires that were established on a broader scale. What until then was called universal history was in fact the pretentious vision of one country or continent above others that were considered to be barbaric or irrelevant. Some even came to say that such and such a people had no history...

6.6.1 Humanity as a Revolutionary Bloc

The ecumene was formed from fractions that were separate or scarcely related to the planet. Only now can humanity identify itself as a whole and recognize its unity,

now that it makes its entrance onto the historical scene as a bloc. It is a revolutionary entrance, thanks to the interdependence of economies, of governments, of places, and so forth. The movement of the world reveals a single pulsation, even though the conditions are different according to the continents, countries, places, valued by their form of participation in the production of this new history.

We are living in a complex world, characterized on the material order by the incessant multiplication of the number of objects and on the immaterial order by the infinity of relations that unite us with these objects. In the last fifty years, more objects were created than in the preceding five thousand years. Our world is at the same time complex and confused, thanks to the force with which ideologies penetrate objects and actions. Therefore, the era of globalization, more than any prior, demands a careful systemic interpretation, in such a way that allows each thing, natural or artificial, to be redefined in relation to the entire planet. This totality-world manifests itself by the unity of techniques and of actions.

The good fortune of those who desire to think about our time is the existence of a globalized technique, present directly or indirectly in every place, and of the exercise of a planet-wide politics, which unites and orients technical objects. Together, they authorize a philosophical and practical reading, at the same time general and specific, of each point of the Earth.

In this entanglement of techniques within which we are living, humanity discovers its new forces little by little. Since the environment is less and less natural, the use of the immediate surroundings can be less aleatory. Things are valued by their constitution, that is, by what they can offer. Acts are valued by their adequacy to the things to which they are directed. Choices are then expanded and diversified, provided that techniques and politics are adequately combined. Consequently, the predictability and efficacy of actions increases.

An important given of this epoch is the coincidence between the production of this universal history and the relative liberation of humanity in relation to nature. The designation of the era of intelligence could have its foundation in this concrete fact: the materials today responsible for preponderant achievements are increasingly manufactured material objects and no longer natural raw materials. We think boldly of the most fantastic solutions and then we search for adequate instruments to achieve them. In the era of triumphant ecology, it is humankind who fabricates nature, or assigns to it value and meaning, by way of actions already undertaken, in progress, or merely imagined. In this manner, everything that exists constitutes a perspective of value. All the places take part in history. Pretensions and greed populate and give value to deserted territories.

6.6.2 The New Consciousness of Being Worldly

Thanks to the fulminating progress of information, the world is nearer to each person, regardless of location. The other, that is, the rest of humanity, seems to be near. This process creates certainty for all and, soon afterward, the consciousness of

being worldly and of being in the world, even if we have not yet reached this condition in material and intellectual plenitude. The world itself is established in the places, and above all in the great cities, by the massive presence of a mixed humanity coming from all quadrants of the world. This humanity brings with it varied and multiple means for interpretation that at the same time clash and collaborate in the renewed production of understanding and of the critique of existence. Thus, the everyday life of everyone is enriched, by one's own experience and by that of one's neighbour, as much by the realizations of the present as by perspectives on the future. At the same time, the now-enriched dialectics of life in the places make up the cultural stew necessary for the proposition and exercise of a new politics.

Indeed, a new world is founded. To be even more precise, what is in fact created is *the world* as unitary historical reality, even though it is extremely diversified. This world can be considered dated, since it is experiencing a single substantive historical moment. The singularity of the present moment of the world is due to the common traits of its technical constitution and to the existence of a single motor of hegemonic actions, a motor represented by profit on the global scale. Indeed, it is this, together with generalized information, that will assure to each place the universal communion with all the others.

We thereby dare to think that the history of humanity on the Earth has finally disposed of objective, material, and intellectual conditions to overcome the deification of money and of technical objects, and can now face the beginning of a new trajectory. This is not about establishing historical dates or marking days on the calendar. Like the clock, the calendar is conventional, repetitive, and historically void. What really counts is the time of the possibilities effectively created, that is, the opportunities that each generation finds available in its respective epoch. In other words, what really counts is what we call *empirical time*, whose changes are marked by the irruption of new objects, new actions and relations, and new ideas.

6.6.3 The Great Contemporary Transformation

Faced with the present world, as opportunity and as possibility, we believe that the material conditions for prescribing the great desired transformation are already available. However, the destiny of this transformation is going to depend on how opportunities and possibilities will be exploited by politics. In their material and merely corporeal form, techniques are perhaps irreversible, since they adhere to the territory and to everyday life. On the other hand, from an existential point of view they can obtain another use and another signification. The present globalization is not irreversible.

Now that we are discovering the meaning of our presence on the planet, we can say that a genuinely human universal history is finally commencing. The same materiality, currently utilized to construct a confused and perverse world, could come to be a condition of the construction of a more humane world. For that to

happen, it is sufficient to complete the two great transformations now in gestation: the technological and the philosophical transformation of the human species.

The great technological transformation comes along with the emergence of informational techniques, which—contrary to the techniques of the machine—are constitutionally divisible, flexible, and docile, adaptable to all environments and cultures, even though their current perverse use is subordinated to the interests of big capital. Nevertheless, when their utilization is democratized, these sweet techniques will be in the service of humanity.

There is much talk today of progress and of the promises of genetic engineering, which would lead to a transformation of biological humanity, something that remains in the domain of the history of science and of the technique. Little, however, is said of the conditions, also present today, that can assure a philosophical transformation of humanity, capable of attributing a new meaning to each person's existence and, also, to the existence of the planet.

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This is a selection of some of Milton Santos's most relevant works organized by type and language. For a more complete list of Santos publications see Santos (2001).

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About Milton Santos



Milton Almeida dos Santos (1926–2001) was one of the most important and prominent geographers in the so-called Global South. Despite his specialization in themes such as urban studies, developing countries and globalization, his main contributions to human science are his expansive theorizations operating well beyond any specific subdiscipline of geography, creating what could be called today a ‘Miltonian School of Geographic Thought’. He assembled a set of coherent and complementary concepts and ideas that together explain different spatial phenomena. Born in Brotas de Macaúbas, Brazil, Santos first obtained a

degree in law, but his passion from his earliest professional years was geography. He worked in high schools as a teacher of geography, in journalism and in politics before starting his academic life as a geographer. He completed his PhD in Geography in 1958 at the University of Strasbourg, France, under the supervision of Prof. Jean Tricart. Returning to Brazil, Santos worked in different universities until 1964, when a military coup d’état ousted Brazil’s democratically elected government. Santos was arrested by the military police and was released on the condition that he be deported. During 13 years of exile Santos worked as an academic in different countries in Europe, North America and Africa.

In 1977 Santos returned again to Brazil and from 1983 onwards was affiliated with the University of São Paulo where he worked until he passed away on 24 June 2001 at the age of 75. Santos received the *honoris causa* distinction from 20 universities. His impressive academic production includes almost 300 scientific articles and more than 40 books, including classics like *The Shared Space*, *A Natureza do Espaço* and *Toward an Other Globalization*. Milton Santos was the only geographer from outside the Euro-Anglo world to be awarded the Vautrin Lud International Prize, considered the Nobel Prize of Geography.

A book website with additional information on Milton Santos and his major book covers is at: http://afes-press-books.de/html/PAHSEP_Santos.htm.



Milton Santos, 1994. Photo by Jorge Maruta, from the collection of the magazine *Jornal da USP* (University of São Paulo). Permission to use this photo was granted by the photographer

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