

Space travels are not so much steps forward aiming at conquering something as they are steps backward into an abyss from which to contemplate ourselves and our situation. Now if we contemplate ourselves and our situation from out there, (the planet Earth), we see that that blue and beautiful ball is inhabited by mankind in a fashion that follows a pattern. Mankind occupies a broad ribbon that circles the Northern hemisphere, a ribbon that is interrupted by the Atlantic Ocean and pierced by the northern extensions of the Pacific Ocean. From that ribbon a pseudo-podium extends toward the south into Africa, and there are two isolated spots on Earth, (south-eastern South America and southern Australia), where there are relatively small human islands. I go without saying that these small islands are especially interesting, because they seem to have been somehow expelled from the main body, and to be expelled, ("ek-sistere"), is, for various reasons, an interesting situation. (For instance: Judeo-Christian theology and existential philosophy deal with expulsion.) The small islands are interesting, because they can be considered miniature models for the main body.

The south-eastern corner of South America is inhabited by people who are facing, like fascinated, the vast emptiness of the Atlantic Ocean, which means that they are looking toward their lost homeland over there, and not each other. Their home-sickness, ("saudade"), structures their geographical, (and also their historical), position, and the fact that they do not look at each other structures their political situation. The home-sick atmosphere, (not unlike Ovid's "Tristia"), will be considered later. The fact that they do not look at each other has prevented their uniting. They form three political units, (Argentina, Uruguay and southern Brazil), a division so deep that the participants of the units know less about their neighbors than they know about their lost homelands. A specially deep abyss separates southern Brazil from the other two units, an abyss that has historical, linguistic and cultural roots, but goes against all geo-political and economic considerations. And the historical, linguistic and cultural differences are vastly exaggerated by the abyss, since officially all three units belong to the Iberian civilization. As a consequence of this exaggeration of the difference between Spanish and Portuguese culture, and also because of historical accidents, the south Brazilian unit is linked politically to an even smaller population island that inhabits desperately the eastern-most nose of South America, (north-eastern Brazil), to form what is optimistically known as the Brazilian nation. Although officially southern and north-eastern Brazil participate in the same Portuguese culture, the economic, social, cultural and even racial differences between the two parts of Brazil are enormous. In a nutshell: southern Brazil is an industrialized sub-proletarian society composed of whites, negroes and Japanese, and north-eastern Brazil is a feudal or even more primitive society composed of white-Indian mixtures dominated by white classes.

VILÉM FLUSSER

So strong is the self-alienation of these people, that even the most critical-minded among them will react, (and over-react), to this attempt to give a phenomenological description of their situation. They are victims of ideologies which are strong enough to cover up the reality, (Brazilian nationalism being the most important among them), but are sufficiently weak to require violent and irrational defenses. But there is a feed-back between reality on one side and ideology on the other, (between what is and what ought to be), in the sense that Brazilian nationalism is tending to provoke a Brazilian nation through constant migration from the north-east to the south, through economic colonisation of the north-east by the south, and through the deliberate effort of the southern dominant classes to force a settlement of the western and the north-western emptinesses and thus create a Brazilian focus. Now although it is obvious that Brazilian nationalism is an artificial and deliberate ideology, a copy of nineteenth-century European nationalisms and an instrument used by foreign interests, (mostly American and Soviet ones), and although it is obviously alien to what might be called the "Brazilian masses", (not to what is the equivalent to the "small bourgeoisie" in Brazil), Brazilian nationalism may nonetheless become a potent factor of a possible new society to crystalize out of this heterogenous situation, and which is the subject of this paper.

Historically speaking, of course, Brazil has always been "one country" in the loose sense that it was a number of colonies administered from Lisbon, and that these colonies stayed politically together, (unlike the Spanish south American colonies), when Napoleon disrupted their homeland. Which means that there always was one dominant portuguese class which transferred its seat from Lisbon to Rio during the process called "independence". It is from this, in fact, that Brazilian nationalism takes its historical justification. But in this context three facts must be mentioned. The first is that Portugal was itself highly dependent on Britain during most of modern history, that therefore her Brazilian colonies worked more in the interest of Britain than her own and that, as a consequence, the Portuguese dominant classes were themselves, before and after "Brazilian independence", dominated by the British ruling classes. The second fact is that the population of Brazil diversified, under the cover of Portuguese dominance, in a way that accentuated African elements in the south and a mixture of Portuguese and Dutch with Indians in the north-east which denied official uniformisation. The third fact is that southern Brazil suffered the impact of European, Near Eastern and Oriental immigration during the last hundred years which made it totally different from the north-east, untouched by such an invasion. So that Brazilian unity is a myth, but myths are powerful factors. Even if, like in this case, they are artificial and made to serve purposes which are alien to their context, namely to maintain foreign dominance over the dominant Brazilian classes. Like spirits provoked, they can one day turn against their masters.

VILÉM FLUSSER

In order to consider the situation, the following method seems therefore to be the best one: first the society of about sixty millions of persons living between Porto Alegre and Salvador will be considered. Then the society of about forty millions of persons living around the nose of Brazil up to Belém will be considered. And lastly the tendencies will be considered that seem to point at a synthesis or amalgamation of these two societies, and a prognosis of these tendencies will be offered. The author has first hand knowledge of the southern society and of the unifying tendencies, but his knowledge of the north-eastern society is spotty. This is admittedly a drawback for the present exposition, especially if, like in the present case, a phenomenological attitude will be aimed at. But it is characteristic of the situation. The abyss between the south and the north-east separates even apparently "objective" observers of the situation, like the sociologists Buarque de Holanda and Gilberto Freyre. Admittedly subjective and committed observations like the present one suffer even more from that abyss.

The sixty millions inhabiting the south may, for the purpose of this paper, be divided into roughly four levels. The broad level of the rural population, an ever increasing level of immigrant north-eastern urban sub-proletarians, an up and coming urban proletariat, and a thin level of urban and rural bourgeoisie, (including the landed pseudo-gentry which economically and socially slipping). The rural population still lives under quasi-feudal conditions, although strong inroads of the industrial society can be felt, (for instance in the form of a vaguely incipient agricultural revolution and in the form of mass communications). It is composed of negro and white elements in a very confusing pattern, the Negro element predominating in Bahia and Minas, the Portuguese and Italian in São Paulo, and strong influences of Japanese, Polish and German elements the further south one advances. One cannot speak of a true culture on this level. Islands of decadent African cultures exist vigorously in Bahia and in Rio, and somewhat less vigorously in Minas. Archaic Portuguese elements pervade the whole level. There is an enormous, (even surprising) poverty in material and spiritual goods, (artifacts, religious beliefs, rites and so forth). What there is is being diluted by the impact of mass civilisation. A cultural misery accompanies the economic and social one to complete a horrible picture. No comparison with European peasantry is possible, (although these people are mostly of European stock), because a well structured tradition, the backbone of peasantry, is almost totally absent. Neither can one talk of a rural proletariat, because there is not even the slightest class conscience. Nonetheless there is some sort of cultural personality on this level, (which can be called either decadent or embryonic), and it will be considered later in this paper.

The north-eastern immigrant population, which makes the southern towns, and mostly São Paulo, swell to inhuman proportions, is composed of uprooted persons which have lost completely every sense of belonging. They are

VILÉM FLUSSER

being sucked in by what to them in their immemorial misery up in the north-east looks like the promised land, but is in reality a poor and exploited mass civilisation, robbed of all their standards and values, and either assimilated in a slow and painful process into the amorphous mass, or spit out again toward their place of origin, there to end their statistically short lives amidst suffering and oppression. Literally tenths of thousands of them arrive in the south every month, in small groups consisting generally of a young man, his more or less wife and five to six children, with no belongings to speak of, unprepared for the new climate and the new surroundings, messengers of a pre-neolithic age within a complex and pityless apparatus. After a period of bewildered wandering and begging about in the street, they agglomerate in the expanding slums and favelas of the big cities, the primitive family structure breaks up, the men work, if they are lucky, as unskilled subworkers in the construction of sky scrapers that grow overnight like mushrooms, the women work as near-slaves in bourgeois homes or as underpaid factory hands, thus keeping all wages conveniently low, and the children are left to themselves to become the future marginal elements of mass civilisation. This process is called the absorption of unproductive elements into the economic process, and is a success story. The unsuccessful, namely the ones that either starve or freeze during the process, or that are unable to adapt themselves to such a situation, are covered up with the silence of bad collective conscience. This steady stream makes up, by now, the greater part of southern city population, and contributes to their low-level amorphous massification. It is, in the last analysis, these people who make the wheels of industry, (of the miraculous progress), turn, and it is apparently for them, but in reality of course for the profits they make possible, that the country is being administered both from abroad and by those who are in domestic power. But it is they who may form, one day, the nucleus of a Brazilian nation.

The urban proletariat is unlike its European counterpart in that it forms a privileged class and ~~in~~ that it knows it. Although it has at present no social and political freedom to speak of, it is the only part of society that is content with its situation. It is mostly of European origin, but is losing all contact with its original cultures. With its typically petit-bourgeois mass mentality it has no social, political or cultural consciousness, it aims at individual and family gratifications such as those which an advanced mass civilisation is giving. The meaningless, formless and mechanical ugliness that characterizes most of the southern cities, (except for Rio), is of their making. These people live in a climate dominated by the myths of mass communication bathed in a nineteenth century ideology of material progress, and they feel at ease in that climate, not being able to compare their situation with the one proletarians live in in the advanced countries. Not much can be expected from them in the future.

VILÉM FLUSSER

The urban and rural bourgeoisie, although much better off than their European counterpart, is far less contented. If it is of Portuguese origin, it tries desperately to cling to its tradition, (which it calls "Brazilian"), but feels the ground slipping in a situation diluted by industrialization and massification. If it is of various European or Asian origins, it senses more or less unconsciously its exiled situation, and is therefore more unrooted, (but also more open and less prejudiced), than the bourgeoisie is elsewhere. Most of them are immigrants' sons or grandsons, therefore sons and grandsons of underprivileged people, and they know therefore that the new country has provided them with the means for personal realisation. But they are the only part of society that knows that their positions, (possibly including their lives), depend on foreign decisions, that they are being tolerated by these decisions because they are useful to foreign interests, and that they are incapable of competing with those interests even in their own country. This fact injects into the bourgeoisie an element of profound malaise and inner conflict, which, in negative cases, may lead to cynical opportunism or alienation bordering on the pathological, but in positive cases may lead to a creative tension out of which something radically new can be born.

The society of the forty million people inhabiting the north-east is far less complex. There is a small pseudo-gentry of Portuguese origin which owns most of the land and works it in primitive fashion through a rural population which is in some aspects even worse off than nineteenth century plantation slavery. This dominant class is the only true cultural personality in Brazil, in the sense that it still possesses traditional standards. It is what might be called "truly Brazilian" in the old and somewhat mythical sense of the term. The mass of the rural population leads a semi-migrating life of indignity and starvation. A very primitive, (better still: secondarily primitive) culture, with a strict ritual and some sort of oral literature, confers on these people a sort of tragical dignity and a beauty of style totally absent in the south of the country. Within this feudal society with its terrible exploitation are the big towns and cities. They are more like enormous slums that give a sort of refuge to the rural population in times of natural or other type of disaster, and centers of administration and a totally alienated culture. Through these towns southern influence is irradiating which begins to disrupt the immemorial feudal structure and tries to remodel the north-eastern society, apparently to make it more "progressive", but in reality to make it function better for the southern establishment as a sort of colony both in the sense of market and in the sense of capital investment. This influence tends to destroy both the dominant traditional and the oppressed primitive cultures, without however notably changing the economic and social situation. But in the long run it might contribute to the coming about of a new unified society, to be called rightly a "Brazilian nation".

VILÉM FLUSSER

Admittedly this is a sad picture of one of the world's biggest countries. However, one can see this picture much clearer from abroad than from within, and the reason is not only the distance, (which pierces ideologies), but also the fact that there is an existential quality to life in Brazil that seems to deny the picture. Now the "quality of life" is a slogan in the developed countries, and rightly so, because material and even social progress has proved "ad nauseam" that it is not sufficient to bring about a satisfactory way of living. There is however the following problem to the discussion of "quality" it cannot be analyzed through quantifying methods. Although quality may be the result of a dialectical jump from quantity, it nonetheless escapes all efforts of quantification. In other words: although any consideration of the Brazilian scene proves that life there is quantitatively unsatisfactory for the enormous majority of its people, any such consideration must also take into account the fact that life in Brazil has a quality lacking in the developed countries. This quality, (which may be specific to Brazil, or may be, in some vague way, typical for a few similar societies), can best be articulated by the phenomenological method. It is, so to speak, the essence, (the "eidos"), of Brazilian society to be discovered.

Let us, for the purpose of discovering it, divide the Brazilian scene into three levels, with the express caution that these levels are, all of them, in a slow process of formation, and are only real in the form of tendencies within the levels and divisions discussed previously. Let us call the first level a "pre-historical" one, the second a "de-phased historical" one, and the third a level at which a "post-historical" man is in formation. As a justification for this division the following definition of "history" will be offered it is a process in which man changes his surroundings, and thereby himself, in accordance to models, which themselves are changed constantly as the historical praxis progresses.

The vast masses of the Brazilian people live in a pre-historical situation in the sense that they may be objects of some change, but are certainly not its subjects. It may be objected, of course, that many of them work, although the majority is permanently inactive due to young age, or maladies, or endemic unemployment. But what work they do, (and those who work work longer and harder than in the developed countries), is not their changing of the world, but a movement imposed on them by others who in reality change the world. They are instruments for the realisation of models that are alien to them. Now this is not a primitive, but a secondary pre-historical situation, and it is important to stress the fact that there is nothing primitive about these people. It is not primitive in the sense that primitive societies, (like the remnants of the Brazilian Indians), are well adjusted to their surroundings and therefore feel no challenge to change them. Primitive societies are content, the Brazilian masses are miserable.

And it is not primitive in the sense that primitive societies have no "past", but the Brazilian masses stem from Europeans and Africa.

VILÉM FLUSSER

cans, therefore from people that participated, in the past, in the historical process. This may be the decisive difference between the Brazilian and the American masses: The American people, (at least as far as its white components are concerned), did not allow themselves to be reified by their European relatives, and therefore, although in a new fashion, continue to be Europeans, and as such participants in the historical process. The Brazilian people, including the vast majority of its white components, became objects of European manipulation, (and later of American manipulation), and therefore no longer assume themselves as Europeans and were eliminated from the historical process. By the way, this may explain the difference in the attitudes of the white components of the two societies toward the "colored" ones: in the one case segregation, (to maintain historical identity), in the other miscegenation, (the abandon of historical identification).

Now this secondary pre-historical situation of the Brazilian masses may be viewed from the point of view of history, or from another point of view which is emerging on a different level of the Brazilian culture. If viewed historically, it is seen as a decadence of the human dignity to be a subject of events, a decadence imposed by alien manipulation, and such a view, (assumed by a part of the Brazilian bourgeoisie), explains a desperate, and sometimes violent, commitment toward a historisation, ("politisation"), of the masses. But if seen from the emerging point of view, it reveals a being-in-the-world which historical man has lost, and after which he is longing. This being-in-the-world involves, in the case of the Brazilian masses, (unlike the cases of primitive societies), a set of values which give meaning to life and which are a synthesis of heterogenous and in themselves decadent values. In other words: the African sets of values, which were corroded by the colonisation of Africa, and which are now being artificially and problematically revived in Africa, and the European sets of values, which are now in a crisis in Europe, are being authentically synthetized on a secondary pre historical level within the Brazilian masses. This demands some exemplification:

One of the roots of European sets of values is the Christian concept of transcendence. This involves the idea that man is not a body, but has a body. Therefore he uses his body, which means that he despises it and is ready, in extreme situations, to sacrifice it to an idea, (the transcendent). One of the roots of African sets of values is the concept of the sacrality of sex which is experienced as the life-giving and form-giving source of everything in existence. This involves not only a religious attitude toward sex and toward the body, but also an aesthetic reverence for the body. In other words: for European values the body is a dangerous instrument, and for African values it is how I participate in the sacred beauty of all that is real. For the new set of values that are crystalizing amidst the Brazilian masses the body is an instrument for sacred beauty. This can be felt EVERYWHERE, AND HERE SOME

VILÉM FLUSSER

examples: The organic rhythm that characterizes the body imposes itself over the mechanical rhythm of modern apparatus, and even to use a type-writer becomes a sort of dancing. There is an elegance to walking, sitting down, and moving one's hands totally absent in Europe, although the gestures are Occidental. There is an almost total absence of pornography, although the atmosphere is much more sexualized than in Europe, but at the same time sex is a "vehicle for sin", unlike in African cultures. The vulgarity and self-consciousness which accompanies the exhibition of the naked body in Occidental societies is absent on this level of Brazilian society, (although it is present on the bourgeois level), but there is nothing of the "innocent nakedness in the African cultures. In sum it may be said, (and numerous other examples for it can be given), that Western culture rejects the body, African culture identifies with the body, but the participant in the Brazilian masses assumes the body. And this confers a wealth and satisfaction to life absent both in Occidental and African cultures.

Another example of an authentic synthesis on a secondary pre-historical level may be stated as follows: The structure of European values is dialectical in the sense that the good is opposed to the bad, that man must choose between the opposites, and that his life is a field of combat between these opposite forces. This structure explains not only Western religious concepts but also all social, individual and political commitments. It is this dialectical structure that confers on Occidental societies their historical dynamic. African values have a mythical structure in the sense that man is conceived as participating in a sacred scene, and his actions and passions are conceived as modelled by transhuman prototypes that also model all the other things in the world. This explains not only African religions, but also African art as an attempt to approach perfect models, and African social structure. Now within the Brazilian masses these two types of values co-exist and overlap, (for instance: there is the concept of sin and there is macumba), but one can also observe a synthesis of the two worlds. Here are some examples: The carnival is a mythical scene in which men participate with religious dedication, but always with the consciousness that it is a playful representation. Football is a mythical ritual in which all male participants in Brazilian masses take part actively, and which constitutes a world governed by mythical models totally unlike the Occidental TV myths, but which is still a world of dialectical conflict without ever losing its playful aspect. The most characteristic mythical model of Brazilian mass man is the "malandro", an intelligent though ignorant criminal, who may be a dangerous killer, but is gay and sympathetic. He is a synthesis of the African god "Exú" and some aspects of the Occidental devil, but unlike his two ancestors he is a playful personality and, although he might kill, cannot be taken too seriously. The word "malandro", although it means "bad guy", is endearing, and is applied to children. THESE AND OTHER POSSIBLE EXAMPLES SHOW THE IRONIC DIS-



tance assumed by specialists in both forward ethical dilemmas and toward mythical living which colors his attitudes and actions. This has nothing to do with fatalism, because it does not present violent commitment, (to the extent, to football, to criminality, to other similar mentalities) but it does give the atmosphere of lightness, of standing above the world and looking at it as a game, which prevents the ethical seriousness so characteristic of the western scene, and the non-transcendence so characteristic of Africa can cultures.

A last example of an authentic synthesis on a secondary pre-historical level can be stated as follows: In western coordinate life is dramatic in the sense that everybody has only one life composed of knowable incidents, every opportunity missed is an opportunity lost, and time is a stream that flows toward death and something must be done with it. This means that every man has a biography, and must try to act within that biography to the fullest. This explains respect for the individual life, and at the other side of it: western mass murder, and it also explains western attitude toward work and consumption. In African coordinate life is a place sure in the sense that it is a participation in everything that is real, and a fraction of everything that is real. This means that only the present is valuable, (because past and future are not real), and that happiness is always synonymous with integration in the natural and cultural surroundings. This explains African respect for the concrete, and it also explains the negative African attitude toward the abstract.

For the African mass man a dramatic vision of life is impossible, because, deep down, he knows himself to be totally alienated from his surroundings, both as far as nature and as far as culture are concerned. But as a synthesis of these two positions he has achieved a sense of life which is similar, in some respects, to what some western thinkers call the absurd living. But it is better in a different way: this sense is a truly religious, and it is with this consciousness that makes life worth living. He despises those who take life seriously, and has a healthy and giving attitude. It is in this sense that he is movementless and hospital, open and unprejudiced, and it is in this sense that he responds to his surroundings with dignity and is far from a distance. Again, this is not fatalism. It does not prevent his festive, organic transition of the present. But it does not prevent his festive, organic transition of the present. But it does not prevent his festive, organic transition of the present.

The three examples of a synthesis on the Prehistorical mass level were given to show that, in spite of obvious terrible sufferings, life on that level has a quality which is very different from the sufferings that makes life worth living. He despises those who take life seriously, and has a healthy and giving attitude. It is in this sense that he is movementless and hospital, open and unprejudiced, and it is in this sense that he responds to his surroundings with dignity and is far from a distance. Again, this is not fatalism. It does not prevent his festive, organic transition of the present. But it does not prevent his festive, organic transition of the present.

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VILÉM FLUSSER

reconsider this quality later in this paper, when trying to arrive at a diagnosis of the situation. For the moment let it suffice to say that it may be resumed by the following attributes: gratefulness, irony, plebeianism and cynicism.

The second level of Brazilian society to be considered from this point of view, (which tries to discover the Brazilian "essence"), can be called the "de-phased historical" one, in the sense that it is composed of people who attempt to insert Brazil into the historical process, and therefore want Brazilian society to somehow jump over historical phases, or go through them in an abbreviated fashion. It is these people who are at present in possession of the economic, political and social power, but it is also these people who contest this power. In other words: the level is divided into two or more camps of conflicting historical models, of which one is at present in power and the others want to conquer it, but all participate in the consensus that Brazil must enter the historical process, if it is to become a place where life is worth living. These people belong to the higher and middle bourgeoisie, mostly of southern Brazil, and the elements of European, Middle East and Japanese origin tend to predominate over the traditional elements of Portuguese origin on this level. The division in two or more conflicting camps, although it is more superficial than it seems at first sight, has some sociological bases. People trained in technological and economic fields, and people influenced by the natural sciences, tend to sustain the camp in power, and people trained in the social, anthropological sciences and in humanistic activities tend to sustain the camps in opposition. People of more recent migrational origin, (like the Eastern Europeans and the Japanese), tend to sustain the opposition, and people of a more ancient migrational origin, (like the Italians), tend to commit themselves to the camp in power. The older generations tend to sustain the camp in power, and the younger generation tends to be divided. It is difficult to estimate the numerical proportion between the various camps, because these people are subject to mass communication and therefore fall easily victims to ideologies communicated through such channels.

The consensus on this level seems to be rational and may be formulated as follows: Brazil is a victim of alien manipulation, and this is the reason why it is miserable. Therefore something must be done to make Brazil at least in part independent on foreign decisions, and this can be achieved only through deliberate development of Brazilian economic and social resources. But this apparently rational consensus has several highly irrational dimensions. One is that the present international context does not allow any independence, much less in a situation that lacks the means for significant decisions. Another is that all the models for a historisation of Brazil are of alien origin and therefore contribute to further alienation. A third is that all the camps on this level are instruments of alien manipulation, and

VILÉM FLUSSER

that they know it to be so. A fourth is that any historisation of Brazil implies the sacrifice of the essentially Brazilian quality of life, and must lead, if successful, to that grey and meaningless life that characterizes the developed countries. A fifth is that all the models proposed are bathed in mythical ideologies which contribute to an increasing loss of the sense of Brazilian reality, with all the additional sufferings this must bring about. And a sixth, and the most tragical, is that the whole attempt at historisation is dephased in the sense that these people want a place in history for Brazil which has become meaningless for societies which actually occupy it. This irrational dimension to every historical commitment explains the pendulum between euphoric grandiloquence and desperate violence that characterizes this level. Although these people are the only ones who really plan rationally, work intensely, and fight systematically, they know, deep down, that they are planning, working and fighting against impossible odds, and that by doing it they are getting ever more alienated from the reality they want to transform.

Now these people are responsible for what is officially known as the present Brazilian culture. For obvious reasons it is a culture which copies foreign, mostly Western European and American, models, and does so in a curious fashion. On the one hand the excellent means of communication allow at present that all models become available everywhere, the moment they are being elaborated. Therefore there is something super-advanced to this type of culture. On the other hand all models are results of a slow and painful development, and are attempts at overcoming previous models, but in Brazil they appear as ready-made models that came out of nothing. Therefore there is something irresponsible and rootless to this type of culture. It cannot be denied that some manifestations of this culture, especially in the plastic arts and music, have a certain force to them, and that in architecture and urbanism one can consider this culture to be an important part of Western civilization. But even in these manifestations one has a feeling that Brazil is more like a body on which these organs were transplanted, than an organism that gave rise to them. This whole culture goes on in a hot-house atmosphere, it is almost unrelated to the natural and social reality that sustains it, and although it might influence that reality in some extent, it is, like so many other phenomena, more destined for export than for inner consumption. This confers on all those who participate in it, even if they are powerful creators, a climate of even pathological alienation.

Let us now consider, in this very sketchy attempt to discover the Brazilian "essence", the third level of Brazilian society, which I propose to call the "post-historica" one, in the sense that it aims at the establishment of a truly Brazilian way of life which absorbs the historical process without wanting to commit itself to it. Now it is very difficult to localize this level, although it is easy to find its manifestations. One may call

THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE IN THAT LEVEL AND ELITE THAT CAN BE FOUND IN ALL THE

12

fields of activities, and who forms, within those fields, islands of an catalyzing effect. They are people who have succeeded in synthesizing, within themselves, some of the numerous elements that make up Brazilian society, and they have done so both unconsciously, (though extensive contact with these elements), and consciously, (though deliberate effort to elaborate a new personality to be called "Brazilian" in the true sense of the term). This elite like elite everywhere, is open to the universal scene, and absorbs influences from all over the world, but, unlike the elite in most other societies, it is able to look at the universal scene as if from above and from a distance. The effect is that these people form a group of highly informed and very active persons who irradiate an influence on the Brazilian scene which might change it in a sense totally unperceived by the groups in power or in contestation. These/These people may establish a deep-level communication with the Brazil- an masses which the alienated planners and revolutionaries cannot.

The best way to try and transmit the existential climate these people irradiate is to give some examples of manifestations which seem to be most characteristic to the author. The first example is a certain type of music. (This is, by the way, the only example well known, although probably not well understood, in the developed countries.) The music I have in mind are songs composed by the younger generation of high northern bourgeoisie, and it shows both the unconscious and the deliberate aspect of the synthesis that is in formation. The unconscious aspect is the spontaneous African rhythm and a somewhat archaically Portuguese cadence of language. It is the gestures that accompany singing, which are characteristic of the gracefulness and cynicism of the Brazilian masses. It is the instrumentation which is a spontaneous synthesis between African and Portuguese elements, with some American jazz elements included. The deliberate aspect is the absorption of musical elements and of theories and models from the Occident, of Oriental musical elements and of Japanese poetry, of American folk-song and of Russian public declaration, of sociological theories and of a critical, though sympathetic, attitude toward Black magic. The result is called "bossa nova", and it articulates a new kind of being in the world that I shall try to consider a little later.

The second example of a manifestation of this new existential climate is a new sort of painting. It is executed in the calligraphic Oriental tradition which has absorbed the Arabic feeling for the sacred dimension of letter writing and the Occidental discipline of deliberate codification, but uses an African palette to communicate the message. It is, of course, influenced by European and American theories and developments, and may be considered as a part of present artistic tendencies by those who do not feel the background. Put in its Brazilian context it represents a break-though towards entirely new horizons in the sense that it establishes, probably unconsciously, a connection with the deeply unconscious models within the more level, and thus artistic-ly, of the world.

VILÉM FLUSSER

A third example of this new being-in-the-world is a new type of writing. It uses the Portuguese language such as it is spoken by the bourgeoisie, (and which is some sort of dry esperanto), but it cracks it up in a revolutionary way, so as to allow entirely alien elements to penetrate it. Lexically this achieves the absorption of elements from practically all Occidental languages, but mostly of elements that come from submerged Indian and African languages, now used only sporadically or liturgically by the masses. Thus it achieves a superficial similarity with the language spoken by the rural masses, but of course the similarity is deceiving, as the new language which is being formed includes elements brought by immigrants which have not touched the masses. The important thing however is the syntactical revolution. The linear discursive structure of Portuguese is disrupted to permit agglutinative elements to be absorbed, elements that come both from the Japanese and from the African and Tupi languages, but also the absorption of the Kanji, (ideographic), elements coming from the Japanese writings. This is achieved not only through deliberate manipulation of the auditive, but also the visual aspects of language. In this the Brazilian writers are obviously influenced by many Occidental tendencies, (for instance: by Joyce and by concrete poetry), but in Brazil these are not theoretical models, but stem from the linguistic reality in which such literature is being articulated. Now this is very important in the sense that language is in intimate feed-back with thinking. A new instrument for a new type of thinking is being forged, and it may have a decisive role for the future of a new Brazilian civilisation.

A fourth example of this new attitude may be seen on what can be called very large scale landscape planning. Brazil is considered by these people an immense laboratory for what must be called aesthetic commitment, and the planning and construction of Brasilia, the re-shaping of Rio, and the Amazon experiments can be cited as examples. It is important, in this context, to draw attention to the fact that here there is a dialectical tension between those who want to "develop" Brazil, namely to transform it into what they ideologically call a "great power", and those who want to give expression to a characteristically Brazilian quality in living. This conflict can be felt clearly in Brasilia, which is, for some, the capital of a future power, and for others a city of the future. Here I am interested only in the second aspect. A new feeling for nature and culture articulates itself in these enormous experiments, in the sense that nature is felt as an enemy to be conquered not only through the intellectual will, (expressed through advanced technology), but also through an aesthetic and religious sensibility, (expressed in symbolical forms). Now these symbols which are being imposed on the Brazilian landscape are a synthesis of Occidental, (cartesian), structures, African colors and rhythms, Indian adaptation to nature, and Japanese architecture. This explains not only the apparently irrational aspects of many of these experi-

VILÉM FLUSSER

ments, but even more so the almost incredible courage to undertake them in the first place. I believe that the only parallel we can find for them is the phenomenon of Hellenistic town building during the post-Alexandrian epoch

A fifth example of this new mentality is the attitude of many in the field of scientific research. In view of their material poverty Brazilians do not dispose, of course, of the laboratories needed to accompany scientific experimental progress. But they compensate this with what might be called an insight in the phenomena which is phenomenological, but spontaneous. Although fully trained in the scientific methods, (most have studied abroad), they still preserve a close relationship with the phenomenon, which is of African origin, but has Oriental dimensions. There is a certain respect for the concreteness and uniqueness of the phenomenon, which must be laborously reconquered by the Occidental researcher. This is not to say that Brazilians are not addicted to abstract theories, (they are even more so than Europeans, since they are even more alienated). But these theories are always felt to be deliberate and artificial instruments of knowledge. A new type of scientific method is in the making, and it can be felt better in industry and engineering, than in the universities for the present. This can be seen in the many new methods that are being constantly applied, and it explains the many failures. Now from abroad these failures are diagnosed as amateurish irresponsibility, but are in reality new attitudes in the making. The result is a new type of scientist and engineer, who can never become a mere fonctionnaire or executive of an apparatus.

Now this new attitude cannot be considered as restricted to a small élite, but it saturates the country. This élite gives expression to what is latent in the whole population, (with the possible exception of the urban proletariat and some part of the bourgeoisie), and by giving it expression makes it conscious to the population. And this attitude can be diagnosed in the following fashion: The historical process is felt not as a stream which drags man with itself, but as an influence which man can absorb in order to use it and become independent on it. It is an ironical but active standing above the various histories that came together in Brazil, not a commitment to them. It always preserves an existential distance, which is shown in the way actions are performed. They are never performed altogether seriously, but one preserves always the consciousness that one is playing. But this attitude of playing, ("brincar"), is not an irresponsible playing around, as it is so often on the mass level, but is a sort of aesthetic and sacred game which makes life worth living. And this is the key to the Brazilian quality of living: life is a sacred game, an absorbing game against death and for the other person. And it is in this sense that it is "post-historic".

To this attempt at a diagnosis of the Brazilian "essence" many objections may be raised, and some are as follows: The essence can hardly be felt

VILÉM FLUSSER

in the inhuman and hostile southern big cities. It is considered to be the expression of alienation by those who are committed to "progress", and held to be partly responsible for the misery of the country. And it is doomed anyhow to disappear in the rising tide of universal massification. This last objection is the most serious one and it says, in effect, that no attitude anywhere can be maintained which is in disagreement with mass communication. These objections are being raised by both the camps of the "progressive" bourgeoisie, the one in power and the one in contestation, and by most of those foreign critics that see the problem. But I feel that they are too pessimistic for two reasons. One is that they underrate the special position the Brazilian society is in. The other is that they underrate the possibility to oppose present tendencies, and to create an alternative for the future.

Brazil occupies a special position within the so-called "third world" in that it has no indigenous population to speak of. Therefore it is not a place where foreign influence must be assimilated. Every influence is both indigenous and foreign. In this it is similar to the United States and to a few other southern Latin American countries. But it is different from the United States in that it is not an active part of historical decisions. And it is different from the few other similar Latin American countries in that it has an enormous territory, and in that it has an African element which is culturally dominant, and a decisive Oriental component. It is therefore an obvious gigantic laboratory not for assimilation, but for a synthesis of all the tendencies that make up the human cultural situation. Of course, the experiment can perfectly fail and result in a massified amalgamation. In that case Brazil may become a model for what expects mankind after the diffusion of all specific civilisations. (A melting pot in the bad sense of the term.) If so, São Paulo is already an example of the cities of tomorrow everywhere, and this is a horrible picture. But the experiment can also succeed, and it can succeed practically only in Brazil, and in no other country. In that case we might be watching a possible coming about of a model for a new type of civilisation.

The poverty of Brazilian cultural structure is the basis for a possible success, because it allows the most heterogeneous influences to fertilize each other. On a low level this can be felt already. Arabic and Chinese cuisine, Jewish missionary enterprise and Japanese close-knit organisation, Italian aesthetic productivity and German diligence, Russian orthodoxy and Negro orgiastic living, already unite in ways that can be seen on every street corner. Portuguese culture is nothing but the ever thinner soup in which these lumps dissolve to become a new sort of system. Now if the tendencies which I called the "post-historical" ones should grow in force, this system may become a civilisation in a true sense of the term.

VILÉM FLUSSER

And this is one of the very few hopes we have to oppose the present tendency toward universal massification. Because Brazil is one of the very few places left where the concept of a post-historical man in the sense of "homo ludens" is not an abstract idea elaborated by isolated thinkers. It is a place where this concept is actually being lived, although of course influenced by those isolated thinkers. Structuralist thoughts are an attempt to free man from a genetic, historical, perception of the real, not by eliminating historical time, but by absorbing it into a synchronical way of perception. But it is a mere intellectual exercise in the developed countries, which are driven, by irresistible inertia, toward a "fullness of time" in the form of a consumer society, the inhuman aspects of which are becoming ever more apparent. But in Brazil structuralist thought, although of course also a result of Occidental history, is not an intellectual exercise, but a lived reality based on given data. "Homo ludens" is not an extrapolation, but a true way of living. At last, and for the author the most illuminating, example of this will be the phenomenon of Brazilian betting.

Like in so many other Latin countries, (and, after all, Brazil is officially Latin), betting is a popular commitment, and lotteries occupy an important place in the lives of the people. A foot-ball lottery has been recently established, which links two games in a way that represents a true tax on the most miserable parts of the population. In this sense it is truly alienating. People stand in queues in order to pay what in the last analysis amounts to a government levy. But this is not the aspect of the phenomenon that is truly important. The publication of the lottery results is a festive moment in the lives of the people, more like a religious holiday than like a moment of material loss, and it structures the week like Sundays. This is so because the Brazilian mass man does not play the game in order to win, but for the immediate pleasure of playing. He manipulates the data of the game not in order to win, (he knows that this is almost impossible), but because of the pure and ironical pleasure of manipulating. What he pays is not a risk, but a sacrifice to playful living, (as are the expenses for the participation in Carnival contests). Now this attitude can be observed in all other levels. The stock exchange is not truly an economic enterprise, but a place for playing. This explains why it never works in a rational manner. And all other activities, like the arts, the sciences and even technological and industrial enterprise, can best be understood if it is conceived as betting. It is a sort of sacrificial, although ironical, commitment. It has something to do with the "pari" in the pascalian sense of the term. It is in this sense that it is "structuralist" and "post-historical", because it is the way of life of "Homo ludens". It may become, because it is spontaneous and also deliberate, a model for other societies as well.