

Prof:

If I understood your question, what you are asking, is my opinion upon the phenomenon of dissent which according to you was characterized last year. But first let me put the following question: "Is it a fact that there is in the last year a new phenomenon or is it not a fact?" I will not discuss this. Assuming that you are right... let us assume that in the last year something new has happened. I do not believe it has, but let us assume it has. Then I would say that what happens in Brazil now has different roots from what is happening in Europe. I will not deny that there is an moment of imitation here. I will not deny that the ~~xxxxx~~ student movements in Europe and the USA have influenced the Brazilian movement ~~xxxxxx~~ superficially so that these movements can be superficially considered as a result. But I do not think that this is fundamental. In Europe, and let me say that the movement in Western Europe and behind the Iron curtain are also different (I believe) but let us ignore this, let us say that in Europe and the US dissent is an act by some people to influence some decision with which they are not in accordance. But here in Brazil this cannot be so. Because, obviously at least to the more informed part of the population, centers of truly important decisions are not in this country, so I cannot directly influence these decisions. If I dissent from these decisions in Brazil my attitude is completely different from what it is in Europe or the USA. This is what, let me define history first. I would say that HISTORY IS THE SUM OF THE DECISIONS DEEDS, IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SUFFERING FROM THE RESULT OF THESE DECISIONS AND DEEDS. If I suffer from the results of a deed I am not in history but I am an object of history. Alright, I believe that Brazil is to a very great extent, still an object of history and not a subject of history, so that this movement in Europe and America is a movement to change the course of history in Brazil it is a movement which tries to make Brazil a part of history. It is the first movement, it is a pre-historic movement, and it is a movement which tries to change the ontological situation of the country. It wants to change it from object to subject. There is a dialectic in what I just said. Because every movement in some sense is cause but also in another sense it is an a-cause. So that in Brazil we may be at ~~the~~ ^{the} point ~~xxxx~~ where an ontological change is occurring. Namely, a moment where passivity is changed into activity. I would say that the movements in Brazil are not yet truly active movements but they are no longer truly passive movements. They are no longer only provoked, they are also in some sense also provocative. Now, what I am saying is a very dubious thing ~~xxx~~ define. How can an object change all of a sudden into a subject. Well, history may ~~xxxxxx~~ show us some examples. For instance let us take the fall of the Roman empire. Let us take it from the point of view of the Germanic tribes. The Germanic tribes ^{are} during the two or three centuries before the fall of Rome obviously objects of history. They are what the Romans handle, manipulate. All of a sudden they change into subjects of history.

Q. Prof. Fluesser: At what psychological moment does this occur. There must be a moment of ripening when...

Prof: If you put it in a psychological way I would say IT'S THE MOMENT OF REVOLT. It's a sort of rebellion against one's being an object. I would not like to put it in a psychological, I would like to ~~xxxxxx~~ keep it in an ontological field. The problem here is to know how is it possible that an object changes into a subject. I have no answer for that. I don't think that the material dialectic is the right answer. Marxists would probably say that as a result of internal tension the whole system changes into a supersystem. I do not quite see how this can be. I confess that I do not know although I am part of such a movement, I only feel its effect upon myself but I cannot explain it well. Psychologically speaking it may be said in the following way: If I am an object of history, I feel myself impotent but the moment where I change into a subject this feeling of impotence is changed into a feeling of castration.

I now have a feeling that , that is I no longer have the feeling that I am impotent, and this is the reason that I am being manipulated but I have the feeling that virtually I could act but that the powers, faces from abroad have castrated me and that is why I cannot act. And this is why the movements in Brazil if I am correct are movements of... this phenomenologically the difference between the U.S. ~~xxx~~ on one hand and Brazil on the other, in the US and in Europe these movements may be said to be in some sense a disillusionment with the establishment, but in Brazil they may be said to be simple fury ^{against} the establishment. If you keep your psychological point of view this is I think a great difference.

Q : Does this fury in Brazil modify or has it already modified the situation here?~~in Brazil~~ Some people feel they have only reawakened reactionary forces.

Prof: I don't think that materially anything has been done, but I think the climate has changed, let me put it this way, four or five years ago, Brazilian intellectuals laboured under an illusion that this country can do decisions and deeds and now the general feeling is that decisions are impossible in this country. If you agree with me that a loss of an illusion is a step forward, then in that sense this is a step ~~xxx~~ forward, but of course ^{xxx} this is a dialectical questions. How can you say that it is a progress if you know that you can't do anything?

Q: Would you say that the Brazilian intellectual has come to this bitter knowledge finding out that it is local establishment that makes it impossible to do anything or is it because he thinks that outside, so called imperialist forces are suffocating any kind of attempt...

Prof: I would even say that it is even worse than suffocating. Let me put it this way, politically. During the Kubitschek and Quadros ~~xxxxx~~ ~~xxxxx~~ administration we had the illusion that there is an administration ~~that is doing something~~ in this country which does something. We now know that it was an illusion. What happened after showed us that this administration just like the previous administrations are merely results of foreign decisions, and if what you call, imperialism (I would not like to use that term) if this influence suffocated what happens here, that would be here because something would be happening. But I believe that everything that is happening here is already a reflex of what is happening abroad. The new thing in our situation is that we found out that there is no authentic self-expression in this country, there is no identity in this country in the sense of subjective identity.

Q: But is this due to the country itself or also to external forces?

Prof: I think that the country is an object. Nothing can spring from an object.

Q: Would you clarify what you said on "if there were true suffocation, something would be happening".

Prof: You cannot suffocate where there is nothing to suffocate.

Two completely different questions. The first question let me formulate it in the following way: I said that I believed that the movement in Brazil is fundamentally different from the movement in Europe and in the United States. You have now asked what do I believe about them- whether this is original, has never happened before in history and whether I believe that the role of youth is completely new in history. I am not sufficiently informed about history but offhand I would say that it cannot be new. It is one of the fundamental characteristics of man that the new generation rebels against the old generation. It may be true that during modern age there has been a reformulation of values in the sense that youth has been valued more positively and old age less positively than before. But I would say that in the Renaissance and in the reformation the revolution was also carried by young people. I think we all have a tendency to consider our own period of life being exceptional. It is not original because we live

...nineteen twenties

I believe that for instance in the ~~19th century~~ the movement was much more fundamental than now. On the contrary that Europe, more especially Europe, but also the United States are in a situation of stagnation and therefore exaggerate what happens there. Let me try to understand what is happening in Europe. I would say that for the second time humanity is being disoriented by technological advances. This is not the first time. It is the second time. The first time happened in the romantic movement. There is something romantic in what is happening today. Technology is now in a different stage than it was in the beginning of the 19th century. What happened at the beginning of the 19th century was man was shown that he could be substituted by machine as far as his body is concerned, as far as muscular force is concerned. The romantic revolt was may be unconscious against this substitution of man by machines. What is now happening is that we are finding out that man can be substituted by apparatus in his force of decision. And what is now happening is the revolt of Youth against this substitution of man by apparatus ~~as a~~ decisive factor.

Q: But why is not clarified that it is against the apparatus. Why is it directed politically against the administrative?

Prof: I think I have already answered this question: because the apparatus nowadays ~~is~~, the establishment is the apparatus.

The next question you ask me is why in Europe this movement tries to destroy culture in order to bring out culture. This is again an ontological question. Let me put in the following way. During History ~~the~~ CULTURE WAS THE RESULT OF MAN'S EFFORT TO CHANGE NATURE AND TO MAKE NATURE AN SURROUNDING IN WHICH HE CAN FEEL FREE. MAN FEELS DETERMINED BY NATURE AND FREED BY CULTURE. NOW WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LAST ~~two~~ HUNDRED YEARS. THAT IT IS NOW CULTURE THAT DETERMINES MAN AND NO LONGER NATURE. MAN HAS NOW THE FEELING TO BE LIMITED BY CULTURE MUCH MORE THAN ~~he~~ HE EVER WAS BY NATURE BEFORE. IN OTHER WORDS, CULTURE HAS CHANGED INTO SECOND NATURE. IF THIS HAPPENS THE WHOLE ENGAGEMENT OF MAN TO A CULTURE IS PUT INTO QUESTION. BECAUSE THE ~~justification~~ JUSTIFICATION OF ENGAGEMENT FOR CULTURE IS THE ATTEMPT TO LIBERATE BUT IF CULTURE INSTEAD OF LIBERATING ~~substitutes~~ IT, WHY SHOULD I ENGAGE IN CULTURE STOP. You say that in China they are trying to destroy culture, I don't think so. I think in China they are much more optimistic than we are over here. They can be a new sort of culture...I cannot imagine a situation where culture would be destroyed. But that does not mean that it is impossible. Many things can happen that we cannot imagine.

There are still many forces at play to preserve more or less our general pattern of social structure, so that I believe that culture will survive, but I do not know if it is for better or for worse.

I already said that our present situation has parallel in history. There are many aspects of what is happening now that I can see for instance in the Franciscan movement. The movement in Europe (I am speaking of Europe now) the attitude of young people in Europe and USA seems similar to the attitudes of young people in the Franciscan movement when it came about. It is in fact a reformulation of religiosity. The traditional forms of tradition have been emptied out through hundreds of centuries and humanity is looking for new structures and new content for its unsatisfied religiousness.

Q: In which way would you say that Church dissent here differs from that occurring in Europe?

if a new religiosity is articulated it is being articulated not so much within the established religions but outside. I think for instance that the "hippie" movement or the movement of the German Youth which have nothing to do with established religion, is more truly religious than the movement within the established religions like the Church, and protestant churches, Judaism or even that inauthentic attempt to capture religiosity in exotic places like India and China.

Q: Yet you find within the strong catholic church in Brazil, a lot of dissenters. Why is it happening? Is it only an imitation of what comes from abroad?

Prof: In Europe and US the movement is a movement of a very late stage of history. In Brazil it is a movement by which the country tries to enter history, so that it has a completely different atmosphere. The Church here is part of the furious attempt to change the country from object to subject. In Europe it is an attempt to change the course of history at a very late stage.

Q: What is your prognosis for next year? Will this attempt to modify continue? Can it?

Prof: I think that the word "Dissent" in Brazil is not the correct word. There is nothing to dissent from because there is no decision. I think that the modification of institutions here are completely futile because these institutions are not grown from the soil of the country. It is always much harder to prophesy for one year than for a hundred years, isn't it? I'd say that the tendency toward assuming the power of decision is irrevocable and that this country one day will enter history.

May be there was an embryonic moment of identity in Braz. History at the end of 18th century and beginning of the 19th century when Brazil assumed the so called independence. But later the situation of Brazil changed completely by emigration. The whole Brazilian society lost its identity and we are now in a moment of search of identity. I have tried to explain this search of identity through three different influences: the influences of the free Brazilian society, the influence of emigration and the influence of industrialization. And I have taken Brazilian Art as a field to attempt and elaborate an identity. I have no authority to say whether in some respects it has achieved success or not.

Q: When you would say not say that this lack of identity is due to economic pressures from outside. It is mainly due to the fact that Brazil became a melting pot.

Prof: That it did not become a melting pot in the sense of the United States. In the US there can be a big melting pot because there is something to assimilate to. This is the reason why in America emigrants assimilate so quickly and why in Brazil they never assimilate because there is nothing to assimilate to.

Q: But why did emigrants not assimilate to the embryonic identity of the 19th century.

Prof.: What happened at the beginning of the 19th century was that an assimilation of three elements: negro, white and indian, and to some extent this assimilation was a success, although not a true identity, because it was not a subjective identity. But there was an assimilation and we could speak of Brazilian culture at that moment. There is nothing like Brazilian culture at the present moment. Now this embryonic identity has become ~~xxx~~ now one of the influences in the search of a new identity. Well, you can always explain something from one given level of reality- you can explain everything from the point of view of economy - if you explain a phenomenon from one field of activity only something is lacking, you miss the phenomenon itself.

The problem of origin is important. I do not know how it happens in

history. If you look at Roman art and then you compare it with Romanic art ~~xxxxxx~~, all of a sudden you feel something new has happened. If you go to Verona you feel that suddenly the German tribes have become cultured. That did not happen yet in Brazil. Brazil is in the same situation the German tribes were in the IVth century.

Q: But in every form of art something of the sort happens. New influences come in and local traditions are either absorbed so that they disappear or so modified so that they become part of the main trunk. This is ~~why~~ what always happens and the main reason why people do not like to be invaded, because their culture disappears.

Prof: Let me put the example of the United States which is very good. The United States has striven for an identity all through the 19th century, and all of a sudden they have achieved it. It is very difficult to say to put a finger to it, where? But all of a sudden there is something which can be called American Art, American Literature, an American way of life, American organization, but you cannot do this in Brazil. It ~~never~~ happened. It started to happen in the 19th century and then it disappears under the avalanche of emigration which submerged this identity. Because in this state it was too young and the cultures which came in were too old for it. There was nothing to assimilate to. Let me give an economic example. There was an economic structure in Rome, the latifundarian structure, all of a sudden it was substituted by Germanic structure which was feudal. In the US the same thing happened- you had a European industrial structure which was substituted by an American industrial structure, exemplified by Ford. Nothing of this has happened in Brazil, we still have American structure- there is no identity here, this is what I meant. But there will be one.

Q: How will they find it? Are they going about it the right way? Will it spring from the people themselves, from the intellectuals? Who or what ~~is~~ will act as a catalyst?

Prof: The moment something originates we are always in face of a mystery. I do not know how this came about. It happens as a sort of "salto". Nature facit salto. It can be explained in many ways but these explanations miss the phenomenon as I just said.

Q: The revolt nowadays is directed against the culture coming from the United States

Prof: It's unconsciously an attempt to find an identity. But aren't they just trying to substitute enmaster for another?

Prof: Consciously they may be. But unconsciously they are trying to find themselves.

There is such a thing as a Brazilian flavor. But this is not enough to give it a new flavor. You cannot say of American culture that it is a new flavor given to English culture. ~~xxxxxx~~ Its something structurally new. And this has not happened here. Not yet. The feeling that you knew what you meant when you said "Brazilian" applied to the 19th century. But you no longer know it. There is no question about Curo Preto being Brazilian. But is Sao Paulo Brazilian? We could actually say, that because of this revolt, search and what have you, we are living at a very productive time.

Q: We could actually say, that because of this revolt, search and what have you, we are living at a very productive time.

Prof: So far nothing has been produced.

Q: But if at the beginning of every new leap in history there is revolt then this is a productive time.

Prof: but you have no guaranty that the salto will achieve anything. Virtual we are at a very productive moment, but we have no guaranty that it will result in anything. Maybe in complete failure.

Q: But you said about China that they were trying to build up a new Culture or were optimistic about creating something new.

Prof: Yes, but I do not agree. This is what they are saying. I think they are just trying to assimilate Western Culture to theirs and they will never succeed according to my opinion. ~~xx~~ They will never succeed to

I feel that a true born Brazilian must have a very funny feeling. He must feel alien in his own country.

Of course in many fields this attempt to find identity has started to articulate itself. We have one articulation in which Braz. identity almost became expressed, and this is in Vicente Ferrreira da Silva. Unfortunately he died. He would take Greek, German, English and would amalgamate them into something typically new-Brazilian - namely as a sort of philosophised macumba. But then I do not know if you can say this was a success. There are many points of beginning. In literature, in music, but this is not enough to ~~xxx~~ make an identity.

Q: So something did begin to crystalize...

Prof: If you say crystalize it is a very happy word. Crystals, very small crystals can dissolve again.

Q: Let us go back and qualify the word "Melting pot". Toynbee qualified Sao Paulo as the world's largest melting pot. Would you qualify your use of the words?

Prof: Let me put it this way. One of the examples that Brazil has not a proper identity is that always foreign models are being applied to explain the situation. One of the foreign models, a marxist model in which our situation is being pressed into categories like bourgeoisie and proletariat which are completely unapplicable. Another example is the world "melting-pot", which is taken out of an American context. But in America the world "melting pot" is a world which strives to explain (to my view) the following process: there was in the 19th century and American identity around the Anglo protestant way of life, on this identity various types of influences have been assimilated, so that you have Irish, Jewish or other elements which are all part of this original Anglosaxon personality. In Brazil this is not so. Foreign influences have submerged this initial Brazilian identity so that it is no longer verifiable. We now have a mixture but not an amalgamation. You cannot say that there is an Italian or a Jewish aspect of Brazilian culture. You can say that in Brazil there is Italian or Jewish activity. Can you imagine the identification of the American ~~immigrant~~ emigrant with America, can you imagine it here? If a Czech jew comes to N.Y. half a year later he is fully American. But this is barred constitutionally here. Emigrants are not meant to become full Brazilians.

Q: But this constitution is an expression of a reality.

Prof: Yes, but then ~~xxxx~~ if there is such a reality then there must be a nucleus that considers itself Brazilian

Prof: That is just what I said. There is this suffocated Brazil an identity, represented in Sao Paulo for instance by the quatercentoes who have no true function but who try to maintain the illusion of a Brazilian identity. E, so Brasileira cannot be imagined in America.

Q: Wouldn't you say that the feudal class of the North East represents something typically Brazilian, even though degenerate?

Prof: It does in this archaic sense which I wanted to give it. Because what is happening in Brazil is not happening in the North but is happening in Sao Paulo.