Peasantry and national integration

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For someone like myself, who is, in principle, opposed to any type of integration, it is difficult to deal with the problem of the integration of the peasantry. To speak of ethnicity and national integration is even more difficult in that it involves still more serious problems.

Firstly, what do we understand by peasantry? To be a peasant is a human condition. In general this condition is seen as deficient. Peasants are those that do not exist, those that do not know, those that do not wear shoes, the illiterate i.e. they are deficient. However, some years ago, when anthropologists began to concentrate their attention on peasants, many new aspects began to be discovered about them. Amongst other things, ‘that they are not only made up of deficiencies but that they also have presence’, especially human presence which is undeniable in them, and which has been lost to others. Seen from this perspective, it is the city dweller and not the peasant who can be considered deficient, a type of generic man, lacking permanent distinguishing characteristics.

We now know that it is the peasant who has something in common, dating back six thousand years to the birth of civilization where the first human society was stratified into two components: the peasant and the city dweller. It is in this way that the recently founded city gives birth to civilization, isolating the peasantry from the condition which had always been common to all human beings and converting itself into an urban minority. This urban minority originally accounted for only a very small percentage of global society (two or three percent at most). It was composed of warriors, traders, artisans and priests. They, however, possessed immense potential.

This urban cell, isolated and differentiated from those who produced food, principally offered the peasantry physical security (with its warriors) and psychological security (through its priests), establishing an
increasingly unequal form of exchange. Since then the urban areas have obliged the peasants to exchange concrete subsistence goods for promises of security. On this basis, a parallel development has taken place over the ages of a peasant and a citizen condition which form the substrata of all those civilizations which concentrated traditional and folkloric aspects in the one and erudition and technique in the other.

From the point of view of integration one can show that it is the peasant condition, in allowing man to maintain a far greater number of his traditions, which conserves the original human character. In the city, the succession of conquerors, the rapid diffusion of fashions, changes everything. However, this is not of importance. The city dwellers were able to change because the peasants continued to maintain standards of living, their nature, which were fundamental for all. Moreover, the city dwellers could even fail (as occurred very frequently in the burnt and sacked cities) because food producers continued as the life supporters and the wombs from which new cities would be born.

Despite technological revolutions, and ever more complex civilizing processes which shook civilizations, the peasants continued to exist in much the same way as previously, until the Industrial Revolution. Among the disasters this revolution provoked throughout the world, one of the most important has been the obsolescence of the peasantry. Since then, the peasant has declined from his historic and ancient position to become obsolete. Civilization can exist without peasants. In England, where the process was unleashed precociously, peasants began to decrease both in absolute numbers and in relative terms such that today they account for only 4% of the total population. Moreover, in addition to being reduced drastically in numbers they were also radically changed, so that today the English rural worker has very little of the peasant in him. The same has happened with the agricultural workers in the U.S.A., whom make up 8% of the total population. Both those in England and the U.S.A., in terms of their nature and the way they think or act, are more similar to the city dwellers of their countries than to any historical peasantry. In reality, those two countries, along with others in the vanguard of industrial civilization, do not now have a peasantry.

During the 19th century, when this process was scarcely apparent Marx, who witnessed the disappearance of the peasantry, predicted the disappearance of other strata of society through a general process of proletarization which would convert all into salaried workers.
What is the significance of this proletarization? In ideological terms, as regards peasants, it represents the loss of an individual self identity which itself signifies their deculturization. It is the loss of ones' ‘self’, an old process which is now becoming generalized. The peasant taken to the Roman city as a slave, or the African peasant taken to America as a slave, are converted into ‘things’, dispossessed of their particular characteristics. Both lose their identity. Their descendents do not know the name of the land they tread, of the trees they see, of the birds that frighten them. For a long time they will be uprooted and alien, not only because they are from elsewhere but also because now they are from nowhere.

On the other hand, those who are still peasants can still read signs in the phases of the moon and in the color of the grass, with a deep and ancient wisdom, full of detail and comparable only to the knowledge possessed by the wisest of the wise. Through this very slow and arduous process, the uprooted are being whitewashed, disinherited of their greatest possession i.e. intelligence of themselves, their knowledge of the world. In the end, they even lose confidence in the capacity of their own intelligence to comprehend reality.

During my experience an anthropologist working with indigenous groups, I have often heard questions such as: Who is the lord of the iron? Who is the master of the salt? Who makes matches? Are there better metals than iron? The indigenous forester, still full of curiosity, has confidence in his own mind because he has not been degraded and dehumanized through social stratification. He wants to know because his curiosity is still alive. The worker never asks anything. He knows that science is a thing of doctors and behaves as if he knows that he does not know and is satisfied, even content not to know.

Although the isolated peasant who modernizes an ancient tradition, always in the same place, forms part of a social stratification, he is closer to the indigenous type to which I referred, than to the common worker. A reserve of what is essentially human exists in this obsolete person. This is a reserve lost to those of us immersed in the streams of civilization.

Integration: to what?

In view of these considerations, perhaps we are now in a position to talk of peasant integration. One of the best approaches to understanding integration is to consider it as a process unleashed by the Industrial Revolution which spreads as a sequel throughout the world, always
giving rise to the same effects. That is to say, as the peasant becomes obsolete, ‘depeasantified’, he will be converted into a generic urban being, a person without a past, a characterless individual; a person who is not the product of himself, of his will, or of his aspirations because he is only the residual product of his own dehumanization, which takes place randomly as a result of an exogenous movement of civilization.

Integration, understood in this way, would be a natural, fatal, unavoidable process; at least this is the way it has been commonly seen up until the present. Perhaps this is how it should be. However, for some time we have begun to suspect that this homogenization does not take place everywhere or affect everybody at the same rate or equally radical. Apparently, in England and in other countries, the process was particularly violent as those countries exploited other peoples and countries in order to sustain this process intensively. Elsewhere, it is unlikely to occur in that way. Even in England there were exceptions. It is evident that the success of the process was much greater in areas where it was transplanted, as, for example, in North America and Australia, than in the British Isles themselves, where we have the Welsh affirming their individuality. The Welsh point to a way back, ethnic reconstruction, which is possible for the very same detribalized English, and far more so for peoples throughout the world who still maintain their own identity, thus confronting the transforming forces of the Industrial Revolution.

Of importance during the last few years is the discovery that the Industrial Revolution does not necessarily imply a compulsive westernization of man, as was thought previously. The products of that civilization—such as steam engines and motors—are human potentialities, and not Western and Christian creatures which, if they had not developed in Europe, would have arisen in another context. Moreover, they can be reconciled with other contexts. Due to their socialist revolution, the Chinese were able to incorporate gasoline and electricity into their ancient civilization whilst affirming ever more their quality as Chinese. They were able to do this because the socialist revolution allowed them to take these instruments of imperialist and class domination and convert them into forces for the reconstruction of China, seen as a project of the Chinese themselves, and for their own benefit.

Up until now we have considered peasantry and integration from a traditional perspective. However, there are other possible approaches which lead us to reconsider these problems and perhaps understand them better. Amongst these is the now generalized notion that the
urban proletariat has also begun to become obsolete, as occurred previously with the peasantry. At least, factory workers do not now increase in numbers to the same extent as previously and they now comprise a minority component of the economically active population when compared to the legions of tertiary sector workers. Thus, it can be demonstrated that the Industrial Revolution, which began by making the peasantry obsolete (reducing its participation in the economically active population from 80\% - 10\%), terminated by displacing the factory proletariat which now accounts for scarcely 40\% of the basic sector of the work force.

What will occur during the new technological revolution now under way (the thermonuclear revolution), with its yet greater power to destroy and remake societies and cultures? One of its already apparent tendencies is that of an even greater homogenization of men in that it leads to the use of the same form of productive technology, the same forms of social organization and similar explanations of the world in all human societies, spreading them universally. This is apparently creating the basis for an inevitably uniform human civilization throughout the globe. However, apart from these powerful unifying forces one begins to observe the emergence of individual positions or points of view, proud in themselves, and which were impossible to observe a few decades ago.

Another perception, increasingly generalized these days, is that referring to the obsolescence of national cadres. It is true that they still appear to be extremely positive and vigorous. Nevertheless, it is also apparent that they do not now possess the compulsive force that they showed in the past. The recognition of this tendency towards the weakening of the state, as a compulsive national cadre within a particular national ethnic group exercises control over others, sheds considerable light on what could happen in the future.

Nevertheless, prior to commenting on this tendency, it is necessary to remember that during the course of the mercantile and industrial revolution, the majority of different human groups was dominated by alien peoples, and the number of ethnic groups was reduced from some ten thousand to fewer than two thousand. The most serious aspect is that scarcely a dozen of these groups increased in numbers or in terms of lands controlled (in the form of macroethnic groups and in national, or imperialist dominated territories); these account for almost the whole of humanity, all forced into a compulsive Europeanization. Never before was humanity so severely impoverished and degraded.
Faced with this situation, the fear of the more brilliant anthropologists was to see the surviving faces of humanity even more dramatically reduced. The considerably greater power of the present technological revolution threatened a homogenization which would dominate and intensify in the next few decades more than in any past epoch. The terrible result would be to place the hopes and potential of man in an ever more reduced number of human types with the evident risk of disaster. In the distant past, if a hundred or a thousand of the ten thousand human modes failed, thousands and thousands would always survive guaranteeing the survival of the human race. Today we are all in the same boat. We are a nutshell on the ocean and if we sink, all will sink. It is as if we were gambling with human destiny on one throw of the dice, a situation which is, to say the least, gambling to much. In fact we are reducing the possibilities of human survival to a random and increasingly improbable chance occurrence.

**Ethnic revolts**

In reality, the situation is not as tragic as this because there are also reasons to believe that perhaps these homogenizing forces are not as fatal or as dramatically compulsive as would appear. This is apparent when we observe the revitalization of ethnic minorities and the increasing obsolescence of nation states.

Peoples who have maintained their ethnic identity begin to have ever greater opportunities to express themselves. For example, the Flemish were never so fanatically Flemish as they have been during the last few decades. In the University of Louvain, for example, the students, after many decades of being francophile, which seemed to be a natural and unquestionable situation, began to demand that their classes be given in Flemish. Everyone knows that the students are going to study and to write their exams in French, but the students demand that the most important classes be given in Flemish. What does this signify? This abrupt demand can only be explained as a late and bitter reaction to the humiliation and violence suffered over a long period but which now has no power to support it. On the other hand, the Basques have never been so energetically Basque as in the recent past. Previously, being Basque was a precarious state; today it is something to be proud of. The Bretons, similarly, were never before as conscious of their own value and of how good it is to be Breton. These and many other similar events which fill the newspapers indicate a rebellion of oppressed ethnic
minorities in nation states constructed by bourgeois society. This is a rebellion which will permit those peoples who escaped extermination and homogenization, and who for a long time seemed condemned to disappear, to survive, strengthened in their individuality in the future.

Those peasants who continued to live with past traditions, also maintaining their individuality, were those that lived for themselves with the passing of civilizations. However, other classes of rural workers also exist, such as the Brazilians, or the Caribbeans, who were never peasants. They were, and continue to be, only a rural work force stripped of their particular ethnic characteristics. The Brazilian lived to produce, first sugar, then gold, and finally coffee. That is to say, they existed to produce other than for their own consumption with the aim of providing profits for their masters. They could never live for themselves, organized as a human community whose objective was to multiply and perpetuate itself. They represented human fuel burnt in sugar mills and in the mines for the benefit of the world market.

As regards the archaic peasants, they lived their own lives, according to a millenarian tradition, remaining the same or little changed through the generations. The Brazilian, the Cuban, or the Colombian were abruptly changed from tribal African Negros or from indigenous foresters into a tablua rasa. That is to say, into men stripped of their own ethnicity and homogenized into the first rudimentary forms of their future being, a New People. Their existence was, and continues to be that of people who have been cast aside, stripped of themselves, culturally poorer today than any of their European, African or indigenous ancestors. They are people having no past, that can only, in the best of worlds, await a future in which they will fulfill themselves, not as a result of their history, but in a voluntary Utopia of their own construction.

The creation of these New Peoples implied a ferocious, uprooting violence which never occurred in Europe. England conquered the world but was unable, or was not required to defeat the Welsh who resisted, and continue to resist the dismantling and destruction of their ethnicity. Spain, which brought all the Hispanic American regions into uniformity, giving them a language without dialect and an extensive common set of cultural values, did not manage to hispanize the Catalans, the Galicians and particularly the Basques. These groups, existing and resisting, serve to demonstrate the future tendency for hundreds of other oppressed peoples throughout the world.
Ethnic reconstruction

In the extensive extra-European world, peoples who were principally remnants of ancient civilizations with which Europe clashed during its expansion, survived, maintaining their identity and self image; all of them infamously sacrificed, exploited, degraded and rotted by the violence, greed, intolerance and diseases of the white man. However, they were so numerous that despite the destruction many survived in large demographic concentrations and with their own ethnic identities, as in the cases, for example, of the Chinese, Arabs and Indians. Others survived in smaller groups, but also preserved something of themselves. That is to say, people who, with what they conserve of themselves, testify to their past when they were advanced civilizations. In the future, over the next few decades, their destiny is to remake themselves, beginning with what they are and constructing according to their own self image.

One day, not far in the future, they will offer the alternatives to the European, which will be the realization of the potential of the civilization to come. In the Americas very few people have conserved features of their original identity. The few that have see in those features stigmas of their decadence rather than signs of their past grandeur. They see in their own racial form the image of ugliness because they had to learn to see through European eyes. Their cultural heritage is a protective cover against Europeanization rather than the survival of their days of glory as people belonging to an original and autonomous civilization. Their social condition is that of peasants immersed as oppressed elements in the body of Latin American national societies. In some countries, such as Guatemala and Bolivia, they comprise the majority of the population; in others, such as Peru, Ecuador and Mexico they number in the millions, some of whom are dominated and exploited to extremes.

Out of this submission, this alienation, this despoliation imposed by the dominators over centuries, the Testimonial Peoples of the Americas will emerge and reform themselves. As the drama of their survival was more prolonged and more brutal than that of the Flemish or the Basques, one would presume that the energy released by their eventual uprising will also be even greater.

The most apparent of these Emergent Peoples are the representatives of a dozen of the five hundred indigenous ethnic groups that survive in America, the great majority of which are formed by small groups of
dozens of people, some of hundreds and a few numbering in the thousands. These twelve indigenous groups, each having more than a hundred thousand members, account for 90%o of the indigenous population of the Americas. As a whole, their total number today is not above 15 million. As one can appreciate, this is a very small number when compared to the 500 million new Americans. But these groups are those that correspond in our continent to the ethnic enclaves which are rising throughout the world in search of the energies which will allow them to rediscover their freedom and dignity in the civilization of the future.

In terms of this picture, what does ethnic integration with the peoples of America mean? Destroying their ethnic identity? Liquidating them? No. Let us not forget that it is they who in one way or another have resisted the authority and force of civilizations over the centuries. All the weapons of extermination, of uprooting and of degradation, the most cruel war of extermination and the most frightening genocide recorded in history were used against them. Personal slavery existed which consumed millions and millions as human fuel in mining activities and on plantations. Their erudite stratas, artists, and technicians who molded and voiced their civilization were eliminated. Catechism, brutally or subtly imposed (whichever resulted most effective) consistently sought to break the windows of their spirit, darkening it. European diseases rotted their bodies, often as the result of deliberate infection campaigns; and, finally, there has existed an indigenism which, in declaring all to be Indians, incited the true Indian to abandon his stubbornness in wishing to be more indigenous than the others.

If, with the ability to use, or the use, of these powerful weapons of Europeanization, the conqueror could not completely subjugate and annihilate the ethnic identity of the Quechua, Aymara, Maya, Mapuches, Zapotecs, and Otomie, how can one expect that without them it can be achieved? History has probably proscribed forever these crude forms of extermination and repression. It would be necessary to have recourse to others. Many wish to see their societies finally homogenized, as much by means of subtle procedures of a protective nature as by general processes that appear to promise the same result. Amongst these the most impressive homogenizing force that one can foresee is the process of industrialization and the consequent urbanization and modernization of society which together would achieve an efficient ‘de-indianization’.

Nevertheless, it is doubtful that complete success would be achieved. Proof of this exists in the case of the Welsh, Flemish, and Basques, all
of them urbanized and modernized but masters of the ethnic self identity which makes them content with themselves and distinct from the rest. The same would happen, I believe, with the ethnic groups in America, especially those with high indices of population. Once liberated from the oppression that weighs on them and, perhaps, principally from the oppression represented by the expectancy of being assimilated and the forms of repression (educational, paternalist, etc.) placed at their disposal, they will surge forth to the tasks of self reconstruction as peoples existing for themselves.

These observations, which would appear obvious, no one knew and none of us would have been able to pronounce until recently. In this case, we are faced with an evident widening of the possible conscience which from one moment to another should increase our perceptive horizons, allowing us to see perspectives clearly which previously were hazy or invisible. In effect, we all presumed that although the process of integration of indigenous populations into the economy of the dominant society, accompanied by their intensive acculturation, would not lead to their complete assimilation (thus making them indistinguishable from the other members of national society), neither would it lead to successful efforts and resistance in terms of self identity and ethnic reconstruction. Moreover, many students of the problem even affirmed that as the indians were in essence a peasantry oppressed by landlords, once liberated by an agrarian revolution they would, *ipso facto*, also disappear as archaic indigenes.

Today it is evident that those indigenous masses which comprise the peasantry of the nations in which they live—or a great part of it—are not even that. In addition to their peasant condition, they also exhibit an ethnic condition which pre-dates their stratification and which is not reducible by even the most deep-rooted social reforms. It is even probable that any reform, to the extent that it be effectively liberating, would strengthen rather than weaken the ethnic identity, offering conditions in which it could express itself.

The serious problem for nations such as Guatemala, Bolivia, Peru and Mexico—the Testimonial Peoples of America—is that as multi-ethnic societies they are structured as uni-national states. This signifies that the socio-political order of these countries is based on the ethnic oppression by the Hispanic groups of the indigenous masses which, in certain cases, comprise the majority of the population. Such a situation leads to conflicts which are disguised at present in thousands of types of resistance but which could explode tomorrow in ethnic wars. These
would be true racial wars, more obscene than ever, a result of the terrible violence that would be unleashed.

A few years ago these risks were scarcely apparent. Today they are evident. I hope that this is sufficient for the *Testimonial Peoples* to recognize, finally, the nature of their multi-ethnic societies and the oppressive character of their national organizational forms. With this recognition the violence hidden in their present institutional structure, based on the Hispanic model, will be evident. Given that this structure has caused so much damage in Spain, provoking and maintaining inter-ethnic tensions, at times of a terrible magnitude, in the Americas they could assume an even more violent character.

The institutional model that the *Testimonial Peoples* must consider is not the present one. Rather it is that of the Swiss or Russians, which allows the coexistence of distinct peoples in a multi-ethnic society within a sufficiently open nation-state. The efforts to maintain the present historic states of the American nations could lead to exactly the opposite effect: not only to perpetuate present oppression but also add new forms of violence that could become more generalized to the extent that inter-ethnic tensions would begin to erupt more vigorously. The result would be the breakup of the nation-states that is desired so much and so erroneously to perpetuate.

As a result of these considerations one also concludes that in some Latin American countries the nation-state, organized by the dominant classes, is reaching its limits of survival, after independence, as the project of its own prosperity. Effectively, in the same way as occurred during the colonial period, and likewise in the autonomous stage, *creole* ownership is based on the super-exploitation of the development of these antagonisms based on class exploitation exacerbated by an ethnic domination, which both disguises and aggravates it.

One hundred and fifty years later, so great are the accumulated internal social tensions (of the type it was hoped, in vain, to resolve through agrarian reform) that, although they reflect, and have also affected the native, have led to the emergence of new indigenous leaders who are ever more demanding and whose historical role will be to struggle until they impose a reordering of the national state. This reorganization would permit the real society, which is multi-ethnic, to achieve the only possible integration of its diverse components i.e. to achieve an institutional structure which is openly multi-ethnic. Only in this way will the way be opened towards a common project of solid societal construction in which the energies wasted for centuries in inter-
Darcy Ribeiro has just stressed the importance of a specific relationship between the “campesino” and the “citadino”. It is possible to understand and analyze this relationship only by taking into account the development of the Industrial Revolution, originating in the West and catering to the needs of Western expansion.

This development does not necessarily imply absolute and universal Westernization, and, in this sense, it cannot compel all the “campesinos” who still live on this earth to “descampesinar”. For they continue to exist, despite the fact that “someone or other” predicts their disappearance every day (presumably in order to add fuel to certain ideologies, such as the indigenist ideology), insisting on the anachronism of their presence (and, to keep on the Western-humanist ground which is the institutional home of many amongst us, the anachronism of their very presence as human beings).

When I say “someone or other” it is because I deem it necessary and extremely important to ask several questions of you (and of myself), such as these: who is who in this case? Who or what are we studying? and why? and who are we studying? and for whom? what do we really know about the hidden, perhaps dormant facets of the “campesino”, who has withered away, who has been ridiculed, humiliated or destroyed in us—in each and every one of us—why is there no peasant here amongst us, or representatives of groups of unions, leagues and peasant confederations? . . . to whom are we listening? to whom are we speaking? Would not the “campesinos” feel a trifle worried by what we are doing, what we are saying here, or what we are trying to say and explain? Who can these “campesinos” really be? where do they come from? (from what continent, what country, what region?) . . . to what nations do they belong organizationally—to what spaces do they belong?

When, following Darcy, I repeat the words ‘human presence’, I am not forgetting that it was in the name of humanity that the Industrial Revolution was carried through, and that this was the beginning of the
'proletarianization' and (so called) national integration (disintegration?) of the rebellious peasant (or race), which has sadly caused the loss of his identity.

Moreover, at this stage in the commentary, one wonders if we are all in agreement (and it would be interesting if we did agree) on the meaning of the term “nation” in relation to historical or other links existing between the emergence of the nation and that of the State (or of the workings of the State). Since people nowadays speak of the Nation States, one wonders whether the nation came before the State or if the State creates the nation -- at what level (s) does the universality of the phenomenon lie? At what level (s) does this universal nature give way to a more specific phenomenon? How and where can one find the distinct parts that make up the processes known as national integration, the ethnic groups, the ‘campesinos’? How can we find the key moments when these same processes come apart? In what cultural area, in what area of civilization? How does this movement towards a proletariat work, at a time when the state is becoming worldwide? What are the specific traits of this movement -- its failures, its weaknesses? At what level(s), and in what space(s) does the presence of the absolute or relative failures not computed in this process help to bring out the “real”, living presence of this movement of resistance, set in motion perhaps some centuries ago?

It seems to me that we must reflect a great deal on the concept of time. The nature and content of time for the ethnic groups (or peasants) fighting for survival (a life’s work in itself) does not necessarily coincide -- and in many cases it does not coincide at all -- with the official values of the institutions which have fashioned those of us present here today.

For the “campesino que está desapareciendo” (n.b. “que está desapareciendo” and not “que ha desaparecido”); for “el indio que está desapareciendo” (and not “que ha desaparecido”) time -- its nature, its content (its color, its smell, its many languages) . . . time doubtless means the time for revenge against the effects of a certain project of civilization which simply implied their total disappearance. And it’s possibly only because we realize today -- and only today -- that the times do not coincide, that we are saying: “the oppressed”, who have resisted and who are still resisting so-called national integration, are finally showing themselves. (But national integration, from a certain stage onwards, means absorption by the State which is in the process of
becoming worldwide, causing the emergence of those unstable national forces of which Darcy was speaking.

I think that these “island people” have never stopped showing their faces, as the history of their resistance began at the exact moment of the imposition of “la pauta europea, barroca, capitalista, industrial” (that is to say at the moment when the mask was imposed). And it’s possibly because the faces were so battered that we didn’t want to see them.

All the creative power, all the profound and authentic knowledge of these “island people” comes to the surface for those who can see, listen to and decipher the enormous amount of things that bear witness to this permanent resistance and which, just in order to be permanent, has had constantly to be brought up to date and has also understood how to profit from objective conditions in order to bring itself up to date. This requirement (the organization of resistance over a very long period of time) comes, undoubtedly, from the oppression, the violence and the humiliations that they have lived through for so long (several centuries). Personally, I believe most sincerely in the role of contempt, as well as hate and resentment, when it comes to the extraordinary staying power of these island people, apparently swallowed up in History. I think that the “campesinos” and the ethnic groups who still resist the threefold civilization process of pasteurization, homogenization and sterilization, which forms part of the institutions of most of the Nation States that we know, have never, in reality, stopped living in a sort of counterpoint with national races outside the formation process of the latter. The term counterpoint is here used in the sense of a certain horizontality. You know that there exist, grosso modo, two ways of composing music. In the first case one works through a succession of melodic formulae that one can or cannot superimpose. If they are superimposed one creates a meeting of sounds, but it is above all the horizontal movement of the melodies which takes the lead, as well as certain of these meeting points. When the sounds meet, chords are created and these are the moments of harmony. In the second case one proceeds above all through a programmed and systematic succession of chords. This procedure was developed mainly in the West (in the urban West) where it was called harmony. It is, moreover, linked to scholastic thought and is remarkably similar to the principle behind the construction of cathedrals. Horizontal music, on the other hand, is a part of the East, along with vegetation, the water trapped during droughts and desert oases, with terraced cultivation and with paddy fields. It is multidimensional music...
because it gives priority to the vibrations of water and not to those of the earth.

It was the willful application of the principle behind the verticality of cathedrals (that of scholastic thought) that provoked the “four plagues” of Mexico. In this country the project for the conservation of the principle of horizontality of the “defeated” who knew how to resist the four calamities and then did so, has been played down. A few years ago, if my memory serves me well, they were selling milk in a shop in Mexico that was “pasteurizada, homogeneizada, esterilizada, blanqueada y sin sabor”. Has integrated milk then really reached its peak? (and in what? and why?).

Since the four calamities were so terrible and the traps were, and still are, so great, one must not forget that in Mexico “those who know” continue to live in and for the moment, and they live in a multi-dimensional labyrinth which is in no way anachronistic since it bears witness to a formidable resistance and since it rightly remains, even to this day, the mainspring of life. Why is it that most anthropologists work mainly in the field of the anthropology of death? Why are they not motivated (or a little motivated) to break new ground in the anthropology of life?

* Allusion to the work of Carlos Fuentes, *Tiempo Mexicano.*

* Allusion to the work of Octavio Paz, *El Laberinto de la Soledad.*