

# Country of the future? Time conflicts and historicity in contemporary Brazil

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“I’m still not Brazilian enough. But sometimes I wonder if it’s worth it.”  
(Carlos Drummond de Andrade to Mário de Andrade)

“In my view, we will only become white on the day when they themselves become Yanomami.”  
(David Kopenawa; Albert, *A queda do céu*)

IF THE COMMEMORATIONS of the first centennial of Independence were anchored in the presupposition of the nation’s existence for the next hundred years, today perhaps what distances us the most from that time is the fact that this certainty is no longer given. In other words: the future – or rather the tangible threat of its absence – distances us from that past. Although in different ways, both in the independence processes, amid the formation of the nation-state itself, and in 1922, with modernist and modernizing impetuses, the future figured as a presupposition, offering a formal framework of possible experiences and guiding their sense. Whether through the logic of the “regeneration” of the glorious Portuguese past, or through the logic of accelerating national progress, the horizons of expectations had in the presupposed existence of the future the condition of possibility of its temporalizations (Araújo, 2008; Motta, 1992). Today, this evidence of future has dissolved, whether the national future or the planetary future – increasingly intertwined. At the same time that Brazil breaks records in a row of fires and deforestation, in the midst of a pandemic, the sixth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been released, indicating that the planet will reach warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius ten years ahead of schedule, as early as 2040, reaching the uninhabitable 5.7 degrees by the end of the century, causing the sixth mass extinction (IPCC, 2021). In this scenario, not only do civilizations rediscover themselves as mortal, to paraphrase Paul Valéry (1960), but history itself enters into a new condition, what Günther Anders (2007) called “the time of the end”. A time when the future is irrevocably questioned by human action itself.

Which does not mean, of course, that there are no images of future available and in circulation. They exist, and they are many. Much of the collective

imagination seems to transit today, however, between the empirical realization of this threatened future and the haunting – very real – of authoritarian, post-human and post-planetary dystopias sold as the (new) last possible hellish alternatives (Kaplan, 2016; Taillandier, 2021). What really differentiates the current situation is not, therefore, the absence of images of future, but rather the loss of evidence of its own existence. It is no longer a presupposition to which we can cling amid shipwreck.

The loss of this evidence of future manifests itself in different ways and in different spheres, from the ever-present (although forgotten) nuclear threat to the emergence of the climate crisis; from the investment in space exploration (or escape) promoted by billionaires to the resurgence of neo-fascist and denialist experiments, with all their death drive; from the planetary scale to national borders. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, added to the disastrous reactions – and, as in the Brazilian case, of a genocidal character (Ventura; Perrone-Moisés; Martin-Chenut, 2021) – of the governments, came to catalyze even more sensations such as those of uncertainty, insecurity, fragility, fear, but also anger and resentment, constricting the horizons of social groups' expectations.

A recent survey promoted by the Museu do Amanhã indicated that 77% of young people express uncertainty about the future (Tolmasquin; Bonela; Cotia, 2021). In another survey, it was found that 69% of Brazilians believe that the country is in decline (Ipsos, 2021). The same survey revealed that 80% consider that the economy is managed for the benefit of only the richest and most powerful, as well as 78% do not see political parties as entities that represent the interests of the general population. An equivalent share, 74%, believe that only a “strong leader” can face this situation, preferably (64%) by “breaking the rules” of the political system. This perception is certainly not disconnected from the diagnosis pointed out by the 2021 Global Wealth Report, published by Banco Crédito Suisse: almost half of the country's wealth (49.6%) was concentrated in the hands of the richest 1 percent of the population (Crédit Suisse, 2021). Finally, for more than 90% of Brazilians, climate warming is a reality, while 80% consider the situation “very serious” (Pinto; Pires; Georges, 2021).

As much as these surveys may have their limitations and problems, they do not fail to point to the current scenario of disbelief in relation to the future, as well as to the awareness of the precariousness of its existence. A political motto like that of Juscelino Kubitschek, 50 years in 5, formulated at the height of the belief in developmental modernity, would today tend to cause much more panic than optimism. Likewise, the motto Brazil, country of the future began to take on the opposite meaning on the international scene to the one originally figured, representing a kind of world vanguard of retrogression, even indicating a dystopian “Brazilianization of the world” (Hochuli, 2021).

Amid the time of catastrophe, however, other times re-emerge with renewed strength; not as future substitutes within the temporal monoculture of a

singular modernity, but rather as other modes of temporalization. Other times and bodies that were always present, but that never properly filled the semantic space and time provided by concepts such as “citizenship”, “representation” and “sovereignty”. Just like today, with the tools of Artificial Intelligence – such as grammar checkers or facial recognition –, which predict the presence of the male gender and the white face in their algorithms, those concepts forged in the processes of independence and in the construction of nation-states circumscribed the universality of their language and constitutions to the singularities of their forms of historical reproduction (Parron, 2015; Silva, 2019). The promise of conquering citizenship, as well as the possibility of exercising sovereignty over their own bodies and territories, were systematically postponed, vetoed, broken, due to another full citizenship – today, in the figures of the “good citizen” and the “patriot” – as well as in the name of an ultimate sovereignty, that of the State and its control.

If modernity, as stated by Koselleck, is marked by the historical tendency of “democratization” of concepts, it is necessary to understand that the limits of this process are inscribed in their own form of universalization, marked by a singular temporalization (Koselleck, 2006, p.267-304). The horizontality of this singular time inscribed in the national project produced, in the same movement, a verticalized hierarchy of other times. While they were erased or hierarchical, the times of indigenous societies, Blacks, precarious workers, women, nature, of all those who did not fit into the conceptual projections of “citizen”, “sovereignty” and “freedom”, served as a condition of possibility for the narrative of that national singularity. As Jacques Rancière (2021, p.19) well formulated: “It is the way of narrating the progress of time that obscures the distribution of temporalities that grounds its possibility”.

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The strength of this singular time lies in the promise it keeps, in its power to always be postponed, creating a bond of waiting and debt. From waiting for the grandiose developmental future to the sacrificial imperative of neoliberal austerity, the promise hides the hierarchy that is (re)produced in the very act of its enunciation. It is in this sense that Jota Mombaça (2020), in dialogue with Denise Ferreira da Silva (2019), qualified black and indigenous bodies as “time machines”, since they do not fit into the sequentiality of modern national temporality, while at the same time they make it possible. The time of the promise, for these hierarchicalized others, is the temporality of an “unpayable debt”, which is reproduced as a mode of expropriation and a form of value production, linking – as in a Möbius strip – the past of plantation to the present of financial debts of the precarious workers of neoliberalism.

The loss of evidence of the future, in this key, before being understood as a singular and unprecedented rupture, must be relativized or, at least, put into perspective due to these other times involved. What future, white face? And here

we come across the core of the tensions that mark today, in its bicentennial, the place of the conceptual heritage of the Brazilian nation-state project. In the same movement in which that future of promise becomes opaque and uncertain, having its very existence put in question, the singular temporal structure that founded it is increasingly tensioned by those other times that were subordinate to it.

Not by chance, reactionary movements that seek to “refound the nation” against the “degeneration of the present” have also re-emerged with force. In the absence of evidence of a future in the name of which to resume the time of promise, it is by investing in a nostalgic past – of the slave empire, of the military dictatorship – that they seek to capture the precarious or resentful affections of the present. When an organization like Instituto Brasil 200 claims that it was D. Pedro I who “made us free”, that same gesture of universalizing singularity is repeated, concealing the condition of possibility of its temporal monoculture: a freedom founded in slavery. Likewise, when the then-presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro promised, in a loud voice, that “every citizen will have a firearm in their home”, that “there will not be an inch demarcated for indigenous or quilombola land” – comparing the latter to cattle – or also, even if it were up to him, he would resume executions like those carried out during the dictatorship, he made clear the project of re-updating the temporal singularity (“one nation, one people, one territory” ) and the consequent exclusion and even extermination of those other times that threatened it. It is not by chance that the celebration of September 7, 2021, called “the new Independence” by government supporters, was experienced nationally with the expectation of a coup d’état, from which the promise of rescue of a lost past would be accelerated.

The loss of evidence of the future thus reveals the tense coexistence between these different times that are constituted today in Brazilian society, as well as their different ways of relating to the conceptual heritage of the nation-state: the times of indigenous peoples, the black population, women, LGBTQIA+, precarious workers, nature, but also the times of neoliberalism, of the traditional elite, of the resentment of part of the middle class, of neo-fascism. In this sense, perhaps we could identify as the main mark of this tension a deep desynchronization of social times. This would imply that the synchronization promoted by the institutions of the nation-state, with the justification of generating a “homogeneous and compact whole” – in the words of José Bonifácio –, is no longer capable of finding stability within the hierarchy of the times that composed it. Since the independence process, the legitimacy of State sovereignty has depended on the establishment of forms of synchronization between citizenship and political representation, as well as between economy and other social spheres. This process of synchronization – and, therefore, also of exclusion and hierarchy – took place through a series of actions and mechanisms, from electoral legislation to forms of access to public services; from work regulation to institutiona-

lization of an education system; from economic planning to memory policies. Thus, it was always up to the State to be the “sovereign of time”. In the current scenario, marked by an accelerated global flow of financial capital, by new communication technologies, by social demands and recognition of different social groups, by the urgency of the planetary climate crisis, it becomes increasingly difficult for States to exercise their historical role of synchronizing social actors (Rosa; Scheuerman, 2009; Sassen, 2016).

It is in this sense that some scholars qualify this desynchronization of times as a time of crisis. Helge Jordheim and Einar Wigen (2018), for example, pointed out how the notion of crisis came to replace the notion of progress as a way of historicizing contemporary societies. Which means to say that different historical processes, such as economy or politics, started to be synchronized no longer as procedural continuities, but rather as an accelerated series of discontinuities and ruptures. This time of crisis is also manifested in the current conjunction between society and technology, more specifically in the convergence between neoliberalism and digital platforms. In the architecture of new media, as highlighted by Wendy Chun (2016, p.69-92), individuals – or rather, “users” – are captured by a temporality of crisis. At the same time that these platforms produce strong engagement and empowerment – via likes, shares, etc. – they also condition users to constantly update themselves at the pace of algorithmic acceleration of the news feed. The disruptive temporalization of platforms thus converges – and not by chance – with that form of historicization through the crisis of contemporary societies, serving as its most effective support. The experience of “duration”, in which authors such as Hannah Arendt saw the basis of the constitution of a public space, is dissolved in the ephemerality of the time of crisis, with its hyper-accelerated presentism.

The sense of crisis that presents itself in this scenario no longer refers to the Hippocratic dimension of the critical point, in which the disease finds its moment of resolution, nor does it mean the interval of passage, or gap, between different moments or historical epochs. What seems to arise today is the crisis as a specific form of governmentality of the desynchronized acceleration of contemporary society. The crisis as a temporality management project.

If the strategic use of the crisis dates back to the neoliberal mode of governance of the last three or four decades (Klein, 2008; Andrade, 2019), recent governments such as those of Trump and Bolsonaro have shown that this synchronization through the crisis can take on new forms and proportions with the extreme right. Through digital platforms, these agents capture the present by vampirizing public attention and agenda due to a non-procedural series of “events” produced by themselves. The recurring “controversial” speeches (actually racist, homophobic and denialist), false polarizations, abrupt changes of position and ambiguities of statements always liable to be denied, fake news, conspiracy theories, inversely mimeses, all these resources are used to produce

a disruptive temporality, disabling more robust articulations between past, present and future (Chun, 2016; Cesarino, 2021). Traditional media, institutions, different agents, although in different ways, end up being synchronized by this time of crisis, mobilized to react to the accelerated series of events and contributing to their very resonance and reproduction. The temporality of the crisis works, therefore, as a paradoxical synchronization of contemporary society's desynchronized times. But a negative synchronization, so to speak, guided less by a project for the future that settles down as a historical experience than by a series of ephemeral and always delayed reactions.

Understanding the crisis as a synchronization strategy implies, above all, also considering what it seeks to neutralize: the sedimentation and duration of other times that threaten it. After all, the loss of strength of the future as a synchronizer of social times was associated with the intensification of demands for recognition of other times, previously hierarchical and excluded. In this sense, it is important to emphasize that we are not just experiencing a desynchronization of times, but, above all, a profound conflict of times. Identifying contemporary temporal tensions only as a desynchronization would imply, implicitly or explicitly, predicting their overcoming by a new singular form of synchronization, promoted either by experts, updating the neoliberal and neoevolutionist imperative of adaptation (Stigler, 2019), or by leaders who would embody in themselves the synthesis of any unity. Thinking about time conflicts, in turn, implies recognizing the different textures of the times involved, their environments, their agents, their tensions, as well as seeking possible institutional ways and forms of these times to co-exist without canceling or reducing each other. Finally, it implies considering whether it is possible to think about the nation beyond the temporal singularity that founded it.

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This conflicting coexistence of times can be seen due to the way different agents – human and non-human – place themselves (and are placed) today towards the conceptual heritage of the Brazilian nation-state. Concepts such as “citizenship”, “representation” and “sovereignty”, which articulated at different times and with different configurations the forms and meanings of the relationship between society and State, become objects of intense dispute and even rejection, carried out by different agents and inserted in different environments. The temporalization of waiting and debt seems to find no more sedimentation spaces in the contemporary Brazilian scenario. The loss of evidence of the future is revealed, in this key, both in the implosion of the conciliatory time of the New Republic and in the emergence of planetary time in national history, expressed by the effects of climate change. In both dimensions, which are now decisively intertwined, the nation's temporal singularity is deeply questioned.

To think about the New Republic's time rupture, it is worth revisiting the classic way of thinking about the temporality of citizenship offered by T.

A. Marshall (1967), in his *Citizenship and social class*. The British sociologist pointed out three types of citizenship (civil, political, social) and conceived it, based on the English case, as endowed with its own sequence: from civil rights at the late 18th century, through the political rights of the 19th century, until the conquest of social rights in the 20th century. Using this model, José Murilo de Carvalho (2002, p.122) traced an important systematic history of citizenship in Brazil, suggesting an inversion of that sequence. Here, according to the historian, “the pyramid of rights was turned upside down”, starting with social citizenship, passing through political citizenship and orienting itself towards civil citizenship. This inversion of the sequentiality of rights, as well as its effects – statism, patrimonialism, lack of civil organization – would be explained, to a large extent, by the tradition of “Iberian culture” that marked the national formation process.

In the way this explanatory scheme works, there is a normative model of citizenship that is temporalized, even though this temporalization is filled by different sequentialities according to each country’s history. This way of reading can take on different narrative and ideological nuances, from liberalism to Marxism, but almost all of them tend to operate with this double dimension of normativity and temporalization. Ultimately, this form of narrative also translates, in its own terms, a certain philosophy of history, whose *telos* not only marks the normality/abnormality distinction of each temporal realization of citizenship, but also implies and justifies its final spatial expansion – not unlike, in this respect, the spatialization of the liberal-democracy model advocated in the 1990s by someone like Fukuyama, calling this condition the “end of history”. Between gains and losses, the meaning of the process presupposes the completion of a subject of right to be constituted by history – or, to use Droysen’s classic formula: “the History over all histories”.

We know today that this “end of history” has already become the past. That full, liberal-democratic citizenship not only did not take place as promised in the countries of the global north, but also did not become spatialized with globalization – and it could not. On the contrary, the models of civil, social and political citizenship were increasingly emptied from the 1990s onwards in the name of a citizenship based on consumption, at the same time that the mechanisms of political participation and representation gave way to technocratic and managerial governments, synchronized by the speed of reaction to a global financial capital (Brown, 2015; Davis, 2014).

But beyond this “great regression” of citizenship, with its temporal character, it is also necessary to emphasize how the spatial dimension is structuring in the way the forms and times of citizenship are constituted. The focus by countries leaves aside the systemic character that qualifies them relationally within a “world-system”, conditioning their possible temporalizations. To what extent is it possible to think about the historicity of citizenship in Brazil, for

example, since the independence process, without considering this spatial-global dimension that profoundly marked its different configurations: from census citizenship and the slave society of the 19th century, passing through by labor and developmental citizenship from the 1930s to the 1970s, to the abyssal inequalities that characterize, today, access to consumer citizenship under neoliberalism? In the same way that citizenship in the Empire depended on slavery and its insertion in an Atlantic market, the citizenship of neoliberalism depends on the existence of an entire global contingent of precarious people, synchronized by supra-state economic policies. If the State constituted itself as the sovereign of national time, operating within its territory, it is essential to remember that its sovereignty has always been crossed and delimited by the systemic positions that make up the synchronization of a global time of capitalist modernity (Marques; Parron, 2020). In this sense, more than happening in time, normal/abnormal, full/incomplete citizenships coexist in a desynchronized space, one being related to the reproduction of the other. Between incomplete (or non-existent) citizenship and full citizenship to be conquered, more than a temporal gap to be overcome – the time of waiting – one must consider the spatial dimension constantly managed in each present.

With the loss of evidence of the horizon of a broader future from which the temporalization of citizenship could be reproduced, it is this spatial and asymmetrical dimension that today reveals itself in all its tension. The veil of the future no longer allows covering, as before, the different temporal strata of the present. And this condition is particularly intense and explicit in the contemporary Brazilian scenario, with the implosion of the last movement of temporalization of citizenship, which began in the 1980s. It is therefore convenient to point out some of the characteristics of this implosion of the time of the New Republic, in order to indicate, in the end, to what extent the experience linked to the Nation-State is not currently undergoing a kind of “spatial turn”, whose effects still need to be evaluated.

Since the 2013 and 2015 demonstrations, through the 2016 parliamentary coup and the subsequent election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018, Brazil seems to have closed yet another cycle of its history, which began with the *Diretas Já* campaign and the 1988 Constitution (Müller; Iegelski, 2018; Bianchi et al., 2021). Not exactly the result of a rupture with what came before, the military dictatorship, but rather the result of a “negotiated transition”, the New Republic ended up bringing in its structures a whole “authoritarian rubbish” inherited from the previous period (Mendes, 2020; Reis, 2010). In the midst of this debris, however, the construction of a project that sought to expand the space of citizenship was also negotiated and advanced, making the 1988 Constitution an unquestionable landmark of the democratization of the fundamental concepts of sociopolitical experience. The progressive character of the Constitution, explicitly condemning racism, providing for the social dimension of citizenship,



protecting the territories of indigenous peoples, served as a beacon of hope in the process of refiguration of the national future (Viscardi; Perlato, 2018). Brazil became, once again – and perhaps for the umpteenth time – the country of the future. However, between every horizon of expectation and every space of experience there is always an irreducible difference, a gap in which we have to live and, in many cases, survive. The conciliatory project of the New Republic was, above all, a time inhabited by deep tensions, ambiguities and antinomies, which would not fail to implode it, releasing the latent temporal conflicts that today become explicit.

In the same movement in which redemocratization pointed to a real process of expanding the space of citizenship, a whole legal, conceptual and institutional apparatus was also implemented that restricted and even subverted that expansion. The intensification of economic policies and the implementation of a whole new neoliberal “reason of the world”, which continued even in the coexistence with developmental aspects and social redistribution, ended up generating structuring effects in the way the dimensions of citizenship, of representation and collective identity are experienced (Ramalho, 2018; Antunes, 2018). Consumption as a way of accessing services and rights, financialization of everyday life, changes in the job market – favoring individual accountability, competition and flexibility –, the adoption of the logic of a New Public Management, all these factors were decisive in vampirizing modern concepts of sociopolitical experience, shaping a new “precarious time” (Turin, 2019). The effects of this neoliberal social restructuring and its entrepreneurial individualization would not fail to turn against the effects of that movement to expand citizenship. Along with the incorporation of an entrepreneurial ethos and a competitive vision of society, resentment was formed on the part of certain social groups, accusing social and recognition policies of violating the rules of the pure market game, thus preventing success of the “good citizen” enterprise. Most recent far-right movements, in their plurality and with their different narrative matrices, feed on this double link between the ethics of entrepreneurship and social resentment, characterizing today the close relationship between neoliberalism and neoconservatism (Pinheiro-Machado; Scalco, 2020; Nunes, 2021). The time of the promise of a social and democratic State, foreseen in the Constitution, ended up being crossed by the competitive, authoritarian and individualizing time of entrepreneurial neoliberalism.

In addition to this restructuring of the social fabric and the resulting tensions, the horizon of expansion of citizenship was also accompanied by the continuity and intensification of a repressive police apparatus originating from the Dictatorship. The investment in the discourse of urban crime, intensified from the 1980s and 1990s, not only served to guarantee the permanence of a militarized police structure, but also began to determine the political and media agenda, guiding electoral disputes (Adorno, 2006). The result, as statistics are

eloquent in showing, was the criminalization of the peripheries, the systematic and unaccountable murder of young black men and the explosion of the prison population. According to data from the 15th Brazilian Public Security Yearbook, 2021, 78% of those killed by the police in Brazil are black, as are 66.3% of the prison population, when racial information is available (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2021).

One of the results of this spatial and racial management of citizenship has been the legal and even constitutional incorporation of elements of the state of exception, reinforcing the profile of a security State. From the National Security Law, inherited from the dictatorship, through the Anti-Terrorism Law, of 2016, to the Bolsonaro government's projects to remove responsibility for police violence, the State increasingly legitimizes mechanisms of surveillance and repression. This constitutional internalization of exception, with the justification of foreseeing abuses and combating "terrorist" acts, ends up giving a legal structure to State violence against large portions of the population, consolidating its social normalization and semantic trivialization once and for all (Frankenberg, 2018). Therefore, alongside the time of the promise of expansion of social representation in the State, promoted by the Constitution and by the pressure of social movements, a reinforcement of its "strong arm", of containment, was also established, aiming to manage the social risks of the disintegration of its cohesion and temporal hierarchies. The loss of evidence of the future, here, becomes the horizon of a threat that constrains the present and that must be constantly anticipated and contained.

The time of expansion of citizenship, therefore, coexisted – and, to a large extent, depended on – the establishment of this other time of repression and violence in the peripheries. One of the effects of this condition, to some extent not foreseen, was that the State itself was being vampirized by the logic produced on its margins, absorbing what Gabriel Feltran (2020) called "elementary forms of political life". A militia reason, which reduces political life more and more to the state of brutal violence, not only took over the police forces, but entered the political and administrative institutions of the State. "What used to be the routine of power in the slums and peripheries, then, tends to 'democratize itself'. Was it not by controlling these poor people, after all, that good men and their loyal policemen learned how power operates?" (Feltran, 2020).

In view of this scenario, it is perhaps appropriate to ask to what extent the parliamentary coup of 2016 and the irruption of Bolsonarism and its semantic and institutional normalization and trivialization represent not only the end of the time of the New Republic, but above all a point of fissure or, at least, the fraying of the conditions of a new national synchronization through the belief in the modern model of temporalization of citizenship. The notions of citizenship and freedom that inform Bolsonarism and much of the contemporary extreme right, with a considerable insertion in Brazilian society, shamelessly make expli-

cit their restrictive, excluding and violent character (Avritzer; Kerche; Marona, 2021; Bustamante; Mendes, 2021). The time of the nation that is activated by these agents, as mentioned earlier, is the time of a nostalgic past, in which the relationship between citizenship and the State was well circumscribed. In this sense, it is not surprising to see the current success among these social groups of companies such as *Brasil Paralelo*, which rescues and updates an extremely conservative 19th century historical view of the national past, marked by patriarchy, authoritarianism, slavery and Christianity (Nicolazzi, 2021; Avila, 2021). The crucial difference between these evoked pasts and the Bolsonarist present, however, is the loss of evidence of the future. Today, there is no longer any guarantee of the formal horizon of future through which an idea of citizenship or nation can be temporalized as a promise, justifying the present and its hierarchies. The circumscription of citizenship in Bolsonarism and in the new far-rights is clearly presented as the continuous reproduction of a State of exclusion, without a vision of future and mobilized through the threat to be constantly fought and managed.

In any case, while in the past the modern temporalization of the future could serve as a mediation mechanism to legitimize projects of synchronization and national “conciliation”, mobilizing political pacts and socio-economic models, today it seems that this form of temporalization is less and less strong enough to produce a new convergence of times. Bolsonarism is, in this sense, just the most brutal, nihilistic and suicidal manifestation of this contemporary condition, strengthened by the technological capacity to negatively synchronize the different social temporalities. Even without the existence of Bolsonarism, however, the temporal conflicts that cross Brazilian society seem far from finding any common vanishing point, where they could synchronize in a more or less durable way. After all, as has already been said, modern models of temporalization of citizenship are also deeply strained by black movements, by indigenous peoples, women, precarious workers, LGBTQIA+ and, as we will see, by nature itself. The time of waiting and debt, far from serving again as a means of appeasement, is increasingly contested due to other forms of temporalization, rooted in different spaces. The claim for autonomy of indigenous peoples, the demands for immediate and effective recognition and reparation by the black movement, feminist and LGBTQIA+ contestations of the patriarchal system and its daily violence, the imminence of an environmental collapse, all these forces refuse to enter again in the singularizing time of waiting and debt.

This conflict of times leads, ultimately, to the implosion of the very modern concept of history that founded the nation-state. After all, how to offer syntheses of the different times that make up the national territory when the very condition of modern temporalization, the future, is no longer given as a presupposition? What are the effects of this for the temporalization of the nation-state and the peoples who inhabit this territory? Instead of the search for new

syntheses that fill the future of modern temporalization, what we are perhaps experiencing today is a double challenge, closely interrelated: to guarantee the very existence of the future and, as a condition of this, to produce new ways of inhabiting the times, different from those we inherited from the past.

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A central question that arises on the eve of the bicentennial, therefore, is how to think about the nation when the very form of historicity that founded it seems to be in ruins (Hartog, 2013). Is there a nation-state beyond the modern concept of history? This is a question to which any sure answer is hasty. In any case, if writing about the national past has always been a means of projecting its future, this is because the future-form was given in advance, waiting to be filled by different narrative contents. Today, on the contrary, thinking about national time necessarily involves facing the loss of evidence of that form of procedural and singular future, as well as the need to speculate on its possible new figurations (Tamm; Simon, 2020).

And there is no way to speculate about the condition of the future, today, without facing what we can call the “Earth event” (Costa; Veiga, 2021). Along with those factors of desynchronization and conflicts of social times that mark the crisis of contemporary society, climate change and its effects are one of the vectors that decisively influence the conceptual and temporal constellation of the Brazilian nation-state. It is therefore appropriate to briefly point out some of these effects, asking to what extent the eruption of planetary time in national history does not also require the making of a new form of setting and sedimentation of different temporalities, in addition to the form of synchronization of modern time. In other words, how this new spatialization of historical experience does not imply new politics of time (Turin, 2021).

Since independence, passing through the different modernisms and mass culture of the second half of the 20th century, nature has served as a fundamental element in the figuration of national identity. Faced with the diversity of peoples who inhabited the territory, the construction of the Brazilian nation systematically relied on nature as a symbolic unification device (Schiavinatto, 2003; Süsskind, 1990). More than that, it has always been seen as one of the conditions of possibility for the temporalization of the nation-state, serving as a guarantee of a future of abundance. The futures of the national past were structurally anchored in the possibility of exploring nature: from the dense forests of “valuable” trees – from which the country got its name –, through the extension of land suitable for plantations and the wealth of minerals in its soil, until the discovery of large oil reserves. In this sense, if modern political-economic thought was formed in the close association between “abundance and freedom”, as Pierre Charbonnier (2020) has well analyzed, in Brazil this association has always depended on the certainty of a large amount of “natural resources” available to be explored. The temporality of citizenship has always been anchored in the structure of extensive

monoculture and predatory mining. The historical time of promise and debt also always had its involuntary guarantor in nature.

What has become clear today is that it is no longer possible to live in that time bought with the credit of the planet's "resources". The unequivocal diagnosis of climate change, formalized in 2021 by the sixth IPCC report, puts us in the situation of having to deal with a planetary future that is very different from the conditions in which societies have lived for the last 11,000 years. The probable official naming of a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene, comes to reinforce the depth of this temporal rupture (Zalasiewicz, 2019). The inescapable awareness that human action begins to inscribe itself as a geological agent also forces us to conceive of nature no longer as the inert stage of human history, but as a complex compound endowed with its own agencies (Chakrabarty, 2021; Danowski; Viveiros de Castro, 2014; Latour, 2020). The historical, ethical, political, epistemological and, finally, ontological implications of this change are still far from being fully formulated, despite the already extensive bibliography on the subject.

In any case, it is worth asking: would the Anthropocene be a new form of synchronization of global and national temporalities? With the shipwreck of modern metanarratives, could this new "climate regime" become the organizing element of a new order of time (Hartog, 2020, p.271-80)? The answers given to these questions will probably define the new configurations and even the survival of such concepts as "citizenship", "sovereignty" and "representation". To what extent can a notion of citizenship whose realization is anchored in the imperative of abundance continue to guide political promises and their social arrangements? After all, the globalization of citizenship based on consumption proves to be impossible to be carried out not only because of the structural asymmetries that relate societies in the world capitalist system, but also because it would imply the complete collapse of living conditions on the planet. There is, therefore, a profound conflict between the planet's habitability conditions and the promises that structure the modern temporalization of citizenship, demanding new global and local articulations between social justice and climate justice (Latour; Chakrabarty, 2020).

Likewise, the assumption of sovereignty of nations over their own territories, fueled by the Westphalian myth, is directly challenged due to the effects of climate change, which do not respect borders and walls. It is useless for certain countries to implement sustainable policies in their territories if in other regions entire ecosystems are devastated. Even if in different proportions and rhythms, the bill will arrive (and has already arrived) for everyone. The increasingly accelerated recurrence of extreme weather events has exposed this fragility of borders and the impotence of a policy focused only on nation-states. The creation of legislation and international agencies aimed at environmental crimes and the control of polluting emissions signals the restriction of the power of States in relation to their territories – obviously considering the already existing asymme-

tries and the very limits of this ideal of sovereignty (Toussant, 2020). The recent international debates and quarrels that have arisen around the Amazon under the Bolsonaro administration, such as the recent indictment of environmental crime at the International Court in The Hague, are an eloquent example of this ongoing process of resizing nations' sovereign power in the face of climate change. At the same time, however, the forecast of migration of more than 1.2 billion people in the near future due to environmental degradation leads to a return, especially in global North countries, to the logic of "walled sovereignties". As an alternative to deal with this reality, the official implementation of differentiated citizenships, of first and second orders, is already under discussion, distinguishing rights between individuals who live under the same State (Milanovic, 2019 p.129- 75). There are, therefore, both centripetal and centrifugal movements that come to structurally affect the dimension of Westphalian sovereignty and its temporalizations, opening different possible horizons: from the creation of an unprecedented "planetary sovereignty", with a technocratic character, to the investment in the pluralization of local or transversal sovereignties (Wainwright; Mann, 2000; Dardot; Laval, 2020).

Finally, the notion of "representation", whose crisis has emptied what exists from democratic systems in recent decades, also seems to be heading towards a profound resignification. The feeling of lack of representation in the political system, caused by neoliberal managerialism, is compounded by other challenges arising from the climate crisis. If the time for parliamentary political deliberations was already proving to be too slow in the face of the hyper-acceleration of global financial capital, what can we say now, when it is the time of nature itself that reveals itself to be faster than the reaction capacity of the market and the States? The history of international agreements to combat climate warming, since Rio-92, shows the difficulty in converging the times of nation-states towards the emergence of planetary time, even more so when these states have become increasingly vulnerable to pressure from large corporations that emit pollutants (Aykut; Dahan, 2015). Who represents and who is represented in these new global negotiation forums regarding the planet's climate future? What are the effective mechanisms of democratic deliberation on a planetary scale? The emergence of a new geopolitics – in addition to modern biopolitics –, guided by geoengineering and the technical management of the "resources" of the planet, is already outlined as an effective horizon, threatening once and for all the representative bias of modern democratic systems (Yusoff, 2017).

If, on the one hand, the notion of modern representation has been undergoing an emptying process, reinforcing centralized, technocratic and authoritarian decision-making forces, on the other hand, it also does not fail to point to possible and profound refigurations, embracing more-than-human realities. The process of including animals and biomes as subjects with full rights, for example, transcends the objectified view of nature as a mere cheap and exploitable resource, as well as altering the modern temporalization of history centered

only on human agency. This recognition of a pluralization of forms of agencies, human and non-human, implies not only developing other forms of historicity, but also recognizing their limits, marked by ontological boundaries and their partial connections (Seth, 2013; Haraway, 2016; De La Cadena, 2019; Krenak, 2020, Kopenawa; Albert, 2015). It is the very notion of politics, here, that is reconfigured beyond its Aristotelian circumscription (“Man is by nature a political animal”), as well as below the horizon of the expansive singularization of modernity. A policy – or, to speak with Isabelle Stengers (2018), a “cosmopolitics” – that really recognizes the others involved and their times, human and non-human, without submitting them or canceling them in the name of the enunciation of any singular future.

In the end, amidst these trends of transformation of the conceptual and temporal constellation of the Nation-State, the eruption of planetary time gives us back the options: doubling the modern bet on the availability of history (and the planet) to human action and volition, or else to develop the recognition of the unavoidable unavailability of the world, creating other forms of habitability. What is implied in these options are not just different future contents, but, above all, different forms of temporalization. While the modern double bet leads to the intensification of a process of singularization and abstraction of time, materialized today by Silicon Valley’s transhumanist narratives, by the promise of interplanetary exploration and by the resurgence of fascist policies, the recognition of the unavailability of the world leads towards a different path, of materialization of time, or, more precisely, of its spatialization, pluralizing temporalizations due to their different environments and the subjects involved. Among these different paths, it is the very form of future, or futures, that is being redesigned and disputed.

Insofar as the time of promise and debt always depended on the necessary abstraction of the different settings involved, it transformed spaces into transitory means of its realization. What temporal conflicts and climate catastrophe bring as a challenge, today, is an inverse process, of spatialization of times. The more abstract the temporality, the more it tends to singularization; the more spatialized, the more it shows itself in all its constitutive plurality. What seems certain, however, is that the time conflicts that mark Brazilian society can hardly be appeased and synchronized in the name of any other singular future. Instead of the temporalization of politics, initiated two hundred years ago with the independence process, what we experience today is a scenario of deep and intense politicization of the times. The loss of evidence of the future may represent, in the end, the possibility of making the cut in that Möbius strip of exploitation and expropriation on which the progressive and singular time of national modernity has always depended (Mombaça, 2020, p.10). After all, if the world is an impossible totality, as Carlos Drummond de Andrade never tired of showing us, Brazil is an even more impossible totality, in which different worlds (re)exist and, ultimately, “no Brazil exists”.

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*ABSTRACT* – The essay reflects on the conflicts of time in contemporary Brazil as the country loses sight of a modern horizon of future. It questions how this loss of evidence of the future as a social synchronizer is revealed both in the implosion of time in the New Republic, and in the emergence of planetary time in national history, expressed by the effects of climate change. In both dimensions, which now decisively intersect, the nation’s temporal singularity is deeply called into question.

*KEYWORDS:* Nation, Temporality, Future.

*RESUMO* – O ensaio se propõe a pensar os conflitos de tempos no Brasil contemporâneo a partir do diagnóstico de uma perda da evidência do horizonte moderno de futuro. Busca-se interrogar de que modo essa perda de evidência do horizonte de futuro como sincronizador social se revela tanto na implosão do tempo da Nova República, como na emergência do tempo planetário na história nacional, expresso pelos efeitos da mudança climática. Em ambas as dimensões, que agora se entrecruzam de maneira decisiva, a singularidade temporal da nação é profundamente colocada em questão.

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE:* Nação, Temporalidade, Futuro.

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