

# Invisible cities

## A phenomenology of globalization from below

Eduardo Mendieta<sup>1</sup>

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*That the city consumes its hinterland, its outlying areas of supply and its cultures and people seems, at best, an overstatement. And yet it is a formulation that Eduardo Mendieta arrives at as a result of a philosophical and ethical examination of a wide range of contemporary studies of urbanization and globalization. Mendieta's analysis begins with a critique of aspects of Saskia Sassen's important work on the territorial bases of globalization. To this he adds two further dimensions: a phenomenological reading that is slanted towards the viewpoint of the oppressed, and a theological reading of cultural and religious phenomena and meanings(s). His approach involves a search for "the invisible cities with the cities that are visible in most urban theory and analysis". What is also involved from an ethical and practical viewpoint is not so much the inclusion of the excluded within the visible city as the dismantling and reconstruction of that city in the interests of the excluded.*

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"I have also thought of a model city from which I deduce all others," Marco answered. "It is a city made only of exceptions, exclusions, incongruities, contradictions. If such a city is the most improbable, by reducing the number of abnormal elements, we increase the probability that the city really exists. So I have only to subtract exceptions from my model, and in whatever direction I proceed, I will arrive at one of the cities which, always as an exception, exist. But I cannot force my operation beyond a certain limit: I would achieve cities too probable to be real." (Calvino, 1974, p. 69)

**T**here are many who think globalization to be the latest intellectual fashion, devoid of content, rich in rhetoric and vitriol. The polarization of positions concerning the meaning of globalization betrays less a substantive grasp of the issues in question, and more a penchant to use this word as stand in for

favourite straw man positions. Nonetheless, we can say that globalization concerns the fundamental issue whether our experience as well as representation and conceptualization of the world have radically altered in a way that neither "modernity" nor "post-modernity" can any longer grasp or hope to render legible and intelligible. At the core of the shift from the debate about modernity versus post-modernity to the debate about the whence and the whither of globalization, is the question concerning the extent to which our *Weltanschauung*, our conceptual gestalt of the planet, of what we can also call the *saeculum*, that is the horizon of human life and history, has already shifted so irreversibly and radically as to require a new lexicon, cartography, and even imaginary. Those who denounce globalization for justifiable reasons do so blinding themselves to a new set of forces and even conceptual horizon, which if not discerned, make their

criticisms vacuous and naive. Those who defend and blithely celebrate globalization do so only because they pay attention to one or two privileged and favourite aspects of the process of global integration, without regard or concern for its other aspects. In this way, these latter turn into spokespersons of the worst aspects of this new world order. There is either too much indeterminacy, vague notions about what constitutes globalization, or too much one-dimensionality, privileging of one or two areas of society as the catalysts of globalization (Veseth, 1998; Grossberg, 1999; Short *et al.*, 2000). This situation, however, is being masterfully remedied by the recent work of Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton, which synthesizes erudite analyses and masterful summaries. They have also gathered in a volume a wide spanning and heterogenous reading list of the different positions, theories and analyses of globalization (Held *et al.*, 1999; Held and McGrew, 2000).

The following reflections hope to navigate a middle path between the Charybdis of euphoric and celebratory pronouncements about the ineluctability of globalization by what many take to be the new apologists of a *pax america*, and the Scylla of equally strong but dismissive and visceral counter-reactions to what many take to be the latest scourge of capitalism, in its highest and most virulent form. These reflections will be guided by the empirically informed but deeply sensitive work of Saskia Sassen, who has pioneered what we can call global sociology, or sociology of globalization. She has been contributing over the last two decades to what I take to be one of the most sophisticated, multi-layered, detailed and comprehensive analyses of the new world economy, and how this new economy leaves the traces of its form of accumulation in the physiognomy of the city. Her work on immigration, sovereignty, the ascendancy of a new post-national legal regime, the unbundling of national economies, and the re-territorial-

izing of global economic and social processes in the city, have painted with broad but masterful strokes a rich canvass of the new geography of the political economy in the age of digitization and finance capital (Sassen, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000).

One of the most important aspects of Sassen's work, and this is why it is an indispensable guide in our times, is the way it focuses on the city as a litmus test for one of the central motifs of her work, namely the *denationalizing of the national and the nationalizing of the global*. In Sassen's work, globalization is not just about the mobility of capital; it is also about the mobility of peoples. It is about the contestation of national policies by transnational and global processes, and the emergence and formulation of new claims by social agents within local geopolitical spaces. Indeed, a new predominance of the discourse of human rights, which supersede and supervene citizenship rights, along with the centrality of a politics of identity that is undergirded by a politics of presence, are to be understood as contestational and oppositional strategies that face up to the unaccountability, fluidity, superlegality, and concentration of finance capital in global cities.

After this critical but sympathetic discussion of these two aspects of Sassen's work, I turn to the articulation of what I would like to call a *phenomenology of globalization*. If we take globalization to be about *Weltanschauungen*, gestalts, and ways of seeing and reading the world, and how these may or may not correspond with our "experience" of the world, then the logical tool of analysis would appear to be phenomenology. By phenomenology is to be understood here that method that sees concepts as embodied practices, and practices as interpretative or meaning granting schemata, which in turn are seen as being part of a form of life, or socio-historical environment. There is no concept without a practice, and no practice without a world. In this second part, then, I seek to understand how globalization is an attempt

to come to terms, in a concept and through a figure of thought, with how our world is lived differently in the age of simultaneity and the collapse of space-time, to use Harvey's terms (Harvey, 1989), and how new conceptual matrixes are required to make sense of the emergent forms of life (i.e. exiles, displaced people, migrants, cyber-nomads, jetset nomad intelligentsia, not on the same plane of power and survival).

The essay closes with a discussion, *City of Angels*, of how "religion" is rediscovered in this new context, and how resources may be located within it that can contribute to meeting the challenges of a globalized world. Such a turn might be unexpected, although not unwarranted. In the age of cultural homogenization, of the collapse of cultural borders, in which MacDonald and Hollywood have created a global *lingua franca*, differences must be highlighted, discovered, if not created. Religion has become important, again, because it seems to profile itself as the one element of cultures that has remained, and this is contestable, partially immune to the homogenizing thrust of globalization. Religion has become a reservoir of resistance and difference. Fundamentalism, as many have noted, is unthinkable without globalization (Marty and Appleby, 1991, p. 5). Yet, religious renewals, and the formation of new religions, are also unthinkable without processes of globalization. Conversely, globalization itself is both augured and accelerated by processes of religious innovation, proselytism and evangelization (Beyer, 1994; Stackhouse and Paris, 2000, p. 1; Hopkins *et al.*, forthcoming). The conceptual moral here would be to disabuse ourselves of the Enlightenment prejudice, perpetuated and exploited by the discourses on modernity, that religion had not been important, had in fact ceased to perform a social function, and that suddenly it had become once again necessary. As José Casanova's work has illustrated beautifully, such myths defaced social reality, and diminished theoretical reflexivity (Casanova, 1994; Luhmann, 1996, 2000; Mendieta, forthcoming b).

## I. The territorialization of globalization

"Large cities in the *highly* developed world are the places where globalization processes assume concrete, localized forms. These localized forms are, in good part, what globalization is about. We can then think of cities also as the place where the contradictions of the internationalization of capital either come to rest or conflict. If we consider, further, that large cities also concentrate a growing share of disadvantage populations—immigrants in both Europe and the United States, African Americans and Latinos in the United States—then we can see that cities have become a strategic terrain for a whole series of conflicts and contradictions." (Sassen, 2000, p. 143; emphasis added)

From among the many provocative aspects of Sassen's proposals for deciphering and making legible the geopolitics of information megapolises, I would like to highlight two aspects. The first aspect is what I take to be a kind of methodological caution that seems to lead Sassen to articulate her proposal in the form of a conditional, in the form of an option. The other has to do with what I take to be a seeming symmetry between agents and actors within the new information megapolises.

Some of Sassen's work could be read as advocating a kind of "methodological humility". By this I mean that some of Sassen's texts seem to project the idea that if we want to understand the new geography of inequality, of the over-valorization of capital and the de-valorization of human potential, as dual aspects of globalization that coagulate in specific contestations within localized spaces, then we better look at global cities. There is a conditionality here that seems to offer an option, as though we could understand the contemporary situation independent of the new mega-urbanization and demographic explosion that humanity is undergoing. I grant Sassen the benefit of the doubt, and I assume that this *if-then* type of argumentation is really a rhetorical ploy.

Nonetheless, I will suggest that there is no way in which we can understand what is happening to the world, to our societies, to our environments, to the seas, to the air around the entire planet, and so on, if we do not look at three related factors: the unprecedented concentration of humans in cities, the growth of the human population, and the increase in certain forms of consumption. Let me cite a few statistics. At the turn of the 20th century, 150 million people lived in cities, that is about one-tenth of the world population were city dwellers. In contrast, by 2006, basically now, it is estimated that 3.2 billion people will live in cities, which is a 20-fold increase (O'Meara, 1999, p. 5). What this means is that for the first time in the history of our species we have finally begun to be predominantly city dwellers. But this is not the whole story. While the 19th and 20th centuries were the centuries of the great industrial metropolis of the so-called advanced world, the so-called modern world, the cities of the 21st century will be the cities of the developing world, the so-called Third World, the purportedly not-yet modern world. Note, for instance, that some of the largest cities today are in the southern section of the geopolitical map: Mexico City: 18.1 million, Bombay: 18.0; Sao Paulo: 17.7; Shanghai: 14.2; Seoul: 12.9 (State of the World's Cities, 1999).

In short, the largest urbanizing areas of the planet are those areas that are most vulnerable and perhaps least ready to assume the challenges of massive concentrations of people in their already over-stretched urban centres. Let me be more specific. While more and more people migrate to cities in the so-called industrializing nations, the disparities between the developed and the developing world continues to grow. Let me cite the *Human Development Report of 1998*. Twenty per cent of the world's people in the highest income countries account for 86% of total private consumption, while the poorest 20% account for a minimal 1.3%. Let me just note also that the richest fifth (living in the information cities that Sassen studies):

- consume 58% of total energy, while the poorest fifth less than 4%;
- have 74% of all telephone lines, the poorest fifth 1.5%;
- consume 84% of all paper, the poorest fifth 1.5%;
- own 87% of the world's vehicle fleet, the poorest fifth less than 1% (United Nations Development Programme, 1998, pp. 2-4).

To these ratios and statistics, we would have to add the telling statistics of the actual number of people who have computers, access to an internet connection, wireless connections and electricity. Couple these abysmally asymmetrical levels of consumption and ownership with the fact that the fifth of world population in the wealthiest countries (USA, Canada, Germany, Japan, France, UK) account for 53% of carbon dioxide emissions, while the poorest fifth for only 3.0%.

This all paints an apocalyptic picture, a doomsday scenario not unlike that so prophetically captured by Ridley Scott in his film *Blade Runner*, which projects an anarchical urban bazaar, teeming with masses from all corners of the world, speaking some post-Babelian pidgin, ever in the shadow of dark clouds that conceal a fading sun, always bathed in radioactive rain.

I would like now to turn to the second aspect of my thematization of some aspects of Sassen's work. Her analysis, at least as it is reproduced here, seems to leave open the way for an interpretation that would see global financial interests, global capital, as possessing the same type of leverage as human global actors have. If we see the city as a strategic site for the deployment of denationalizing and re-territorializing processes and contestations, does this mean that all agents are on the same level? Is this new topology of power characterized by a levelled plain? And here, I would have to say no. In other words, it is not the case that the globalizing that is operated and executed by global financial networks is of the same character and extent as that which is enacted

by immigrants and women of colour, to mention the actors Sassen mentions.

I will go a step forward, and focus on the USA. Home to at least four of the most important megapolises in the circuits of technology, information, finance capital, as well as immigration and urban oppositional politics from below (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Miami) the USA has had a long history of bias against cities. These biases are built into the tax structures at the federal and local levels. They are built into the very policies of the Welfare State, and the allocation of national wealth through development grants, tax incentives, brakes, grants and loans, etc. A whole series of factors has built a complex web of legal and tax codes, infra-structure construction, development incentives, etc. that adversely affects the core areas of cities and which simultaneously rewards urban sprawl, privatization, highway construction and urban capital flight. In brief, in the USA, at least very clearly and concerted since the end of World War II, housing, taxing, educational, highway constructions policies, etc. have conspired to produce the hollowing of cities and the expansion of a socially wasteful, and ecologically devastating urban sprawl. The major info-megapolises of the New Brave World of surreal wealth are oases of grotesque luxury in the midst of vast deserts of poverty, crumbling infra-structure, rusting bridges, broken public phones, poor and unsuitable public schools. . . and the litany can go. This logic of urban development in the USA has been a luxury that can only be bought at the expense of the asymmetries which I pointed out earlier. And here I would like to refer people to the work of Daniel D. Luria and Joel Rogers on a new urban politics for the 21st century (Jackson, 1985; Massey and Denton, 1993; Luria and Rogers, 1999).

The point, however, that I am trying to elaborate is the following. It is simply not the case that different actors enter the territory of the global city on the same level. In fact, it is a territory that is already organized in such a way as to preclude certain agents from

confronting, from elaborating their rights to the city with the same level of force and efficacy that transnationals enact and enforce their claims on urban space. My question, then, would be: how do we develop an analysis that takes into account the unlevelled terrain that constitutes the new topology of power in which certain actors are more clearly at a disadvantage than others? What new forms of legitimacy and politics can we appeal to, or begin to configure, when urban dwellers find themselves historically condemned to always stand in a substantively adverse situation of economic, political, and legal power *vis-à-vis* the substantively effective legal, financial and political forces of globalizing finance capital? In what way, in short, can we begin to elaborate a politics of the *right to the city*, to use that felicitous phrase of Henri Lefebvre, which unquestionably will become the number one form of politics in this age of megacities and hyper-urbanization, from the standpoint of those who have been historically excluded from exercising their rights to their cities? (Lefebvre, 1969).

## II. A phenomenology of globalization

“The expression ‘phenomenology’ can be formulated in Greek as *legein ta phainomena*. But *legein* means *apophainesthai*. Hence phenomenology means: *apophphainesthai ta phainomena* — to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself. That is the formal meaning of the type of research that call itself ‘phenomenology.’ But this expresses nothing other than the maxim formulated above: ‘To the things themselves!’” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 30)

I turn now to the presentation of what I call a phenomenology of globalization. By a phenomenology of globalization I understand the analysis of those experiences that human beings, in varying degrees, are undergoing as a result of new socio-economic-

cultural and political processes, which in turn condition the horizon of all possible expectations against which new experiences are possible at all.

Human experience happens against a spatio-temporal background: the life-world. At the same time, human experience projects itself forward into a horizon of expectations that is conditioned by the structures of the life-world. Human experience, therefore, is always framed or structured by spatial and temporal co-ordinates. Ideas of the world, or world-views, are coagulations of those spatio-temporal configurations (Giddens, 1984, 1987). Images of the world, or world-images, are ways in which we understand our relationships to space and time. For this reason, the way we conceptualize the world, imagine the world, mirrors the way we conceptualize ourselves as humans. The point of these reflections is to begin to think of globalization as a way of viewing the world: as an image of the world (Heidegger, 1977). And to this extent, then, globalization acquires a philosophical status that requires a phenomenological analysis (Jameson, 1998).

In the following I would like to describe what I take to be fundamental elements of a phenomenology of globalization. I discuss four points of departure for a phenomenology of globalization, from the perspective of those most adversely affected by the impacts and transformations unleashed by globalization. It is also clear that they betray a Western perspective, although one which is conscious of the privilege and narrowness that underwrites and supports it.

*First*, any phenomenology of globalization will have to begin with the description, analysis and study of the exponential acceleration of the production and dissemination of information. Of course, information is not knowledge. Knowledge might be broadly defined as “a set of organized statements of facts or ideas, presenting a reasoned judgment or an experimental result, which is transmitted to others through some communication medium. . .” (see Castells, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 17, n. 27). Information, on the other

hand, presupposes knowledge and data. More precisely, information is the communication of knowledge and data, in such a way that the latter has to be discriminated from the former. Data are made up of raw statements and experimental results without the reasoned judgment. No one will deny the leaps in knowledge acquisition and information transmission that have taken place over the last 50 years, since the atom bomb was first invented and exploded over desert at Los Alamos. It is this glaring transformation of our knowledge of the world, ourselves and the cosmos in general that has incited some to call this the “information age”.

If we follow Karl Jaspers, as well as Pierre Chaunu and Ferdinand Braudel, we might suggest that every major epochal transformation in human consciousness was catalysed by transformations in the means of acquisition of knowledge and its communication through different media or tools of information. The axial period, of which Jaspers spoke in his work on *The Origin and Goal of History*, which took place between the 6th and 2nd centuries before Christ, had to do with the invention of books, the development of major cities and the expansion of networks of economic exchange in terms of trade routes (Jaspers, 1953). At this time, however, paper and books were fragile, expensive, and to a large extent tools of luxury and privilege. Knowledge of the world was guided by mythological world-views which were controlled by almost unassailable authorities. The 16th century, another axial age, was marked by the printing revolution inaugurated by Gutenberg, the establishment of new trade routes, and the secularization of knowledge production and distribution with the emergence of philosophers and intellectuals.

The 20th century has marked yet another shift in the way we produce and distribute knowledge and disseminate it as information. One of the greatest unsung and neglected triumphs of the 20th century has been the institutionalization of mass education.

Many have been the horrors that have visited cultures through their encounter with the nation-state, but one of the clear benefits of this encounter has been the development of mass literacy and the establishment of education institutions that are, if not *de facto*, at least nominally open to all citizens of the state. Talcott Parsons called this achievement of the nation-state the educational revolution. Amartya Sen, for instance, has urged us to measure absolute poverty in terms of the years of schooling, along with access to potable water, quality of air and access to minimally nutritious food (Sen, 1999). But this is only the least noticeable, although perhaps the most important aspect of the information revolution of the 20th century. The most noticeable is, of course, the computer and telecommunications revolutions. Jeremy Rifkin has appropriately suggested that we talk in terms of the "bio-tech century" and that we understand that the genetic, computer and telecommunications revolutions are different flanks of one same front: the information revolution (Rifkin, 1998). DNA was discovered by Watson and Crick in 1953, in 1990 the USA launched the Genome project, by the turn of the third millennium, the entire human genome, plus the genetic make up of the most important foods will be controlled by a few multinationals (Dawkins, 1997). In the USA already over 25% of the grain produced is genetically engineered. Presently, one of the most important conflicts between the USA and Europe since the deployment of missiles throughout Western Europe during the 1960s and 1980s is brewing over the import of genetically altered produce and meats. You might want to call this bio-tech imperialism, but you may also call it the carrying out to its logical conclusion of the "agricultural revolution" (Shiva, 1991, 1997, 1999). Similarly, the computer was invented during the 1940s, but only began to be mass produced in the 1970s. Today, any laptop has more computational power than all of the computers of the first generation put together.

Micro-chips are superseded every 18 months, with each new cycle increasing exponentially the speed, memory and concentration of micro-processors. In 1957, the Russians launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, the Americans followed in 1962 with the launching of Telstar 1, the first television satellite. Today there are more than 200 satellites forming a canopy of electric nodes linking the world in a net of synchronous telecommunications. It is projected that by the first decade of the next millennium there will be more than 300 satellites (*National Geographic*, 1999).

One of the fundamental characteristics of the modern world is that the extraction of raw materials and their transformation into commodities has been demoted from its place of privilege in bourgeois capitalism by the production of scientific knowledge and its dissemination as information. This is what the information revolution amounts to, namely the superseding of the industrial revolution by the transformation both in the means and object of production (Baudrillard, 1981; Lash and Urry, 1994; Lowe, 1995). Today, what matters is not the raw material and the possession of the means of production; instead, what matters is the knowledge that allows one to discover, even invent, raw materials which are processed through ever-changing means of production. The clearest example of this is the bio-tech industry, where Monsanto is the perfect illustration of the supervening of raw materials and means of production by the production of knowledge that controls seeds and how they are processed (Lappé and Bailey, 1998; Rifkin, 1998).

*Second*, the acceleration of the production and information dissemination has had a direct and evident impact on the way we think about history and tradition. The durability and unifying role of our world-views or images of the world is a function of the relationship between our individual, bodily, experience of space and time and the way the world surrounding us itself undergoes change. The world around us, in turn, is

made up of the social world, and the natural world. Each one has its own rhythms and time (Kubler, 1962; Elias, 1992; Heidegger, 1992; Benford, 1999). In light of this, we should speak of a biomorphic space-time, social space-time and world space-time (Wallerstein, 1991). Biomorphic space-time is the way space and time are experienced by the individual. The clock that measures this space-time might be said to be the biological clock of each human being. Social space-time is what social groups, societies, communities live and experience. This space-time is measured in generations, historical processes, events, the rise and fall of cities. The motor of this space-time is the level of socio-technical development of a society: its infra-structures and super-structures. World space-time is the pace at which the natural world evolves and transforms, seasons come and go, rivers run and dry up, mountains erode, plains dry up and become deserts and forests are cut down and grow up, or turn into shrubbery and wasteland. The further back we look in the history of humanity, the more disjointed and separate were the rhythms at which these different clocks ran and operated.

Today, there is a convergence of the speeds of these different space-times. If we compare the speed of world space-time and biomorphic space-time, we find that they are running almost simultaneously. In other words, the more our own life-spans are lengthened, and world space-time, the time or speed at which the world itself changes, shrinks, the more unstable and local are our world-views or images of the world. Cosmological views, as well as abstract universality, were able to be sustained as long as the world did not seem not to change, and humans had such short life-spans that any substantive change in the world was not noticeable and experienceable by any two or three generations. Pierre Chaunu (1974) remarked that one of the fundamental elements in the possibility for the communication of knowledge was the lengthening of the life-spans of humans during and after the 16th century. Today, we have the convergence of unprece-

ded human life-spans (to the extent that some societies are registering the divergent vectors of the general ageing of their populations, and the lowering of infant mortality, where both are clearly a function of the improvement in general medicine and its having been made more broadly available) with unprecedentedly accelerated world changes. The latter is not simply a mere mirage occasioned by almost synchronous world communication. It is the case that we are changing the face of the planet in ways that not just generations but individuals are able to note and distinctly remember. In this way we can talk about the malleability of tradition and the arbitrariness of history. In other words, what Harvey and Giddens called respectively the compression and collapse of space-time manifests itself in the contemporary plurification of historical methodologies and re-narrativation of histories, as well as the skepticism that any historical chronology is not a function of some ideological agenda. Historical revision has become the daily bread of the historically cynical masses of peoples who cannot read in history the telos of either emancipation or rationality. In *the age of globalization, reason does not entail freedom, nor revolution freedom, nor reason revolution*. In this way, we can say with Heelas, Lash and Morris that we live in an post-traditional or de-traditionalized world, in which these notations that gave cohesion and direction to the project of modernity have been superseded, or rendered ideological and historicized (Heelas *et al.*, 1996).

*Third*, any phenomenology of globalization must also begin with what I take to be an equally momentous transformation of human societies, and this has to do with the mega-urbanization of the world. We can say that for most of its history, most of humanity has been rural. Cities developed as appendages to large agricultural areas. Cities were functional principles of rural areas. Eventually this relationship reversed, but only after the city ceased to be a communication node for agricultural exchange. Cities started

to acquire their independence when they could produce their own commodities, namely knowledge and political power. This only began to happen after the Renaissance when major cities were not just ports but also centres of learning, culture and political power (Hall, 1998). This trend, however, only takes off when industrialization allows cities to become their own productive centres, even if they still remain tied to rural centres. The reversal of the relationship between rural and urban areas, however, began to shift in the 1950s, during these years already 30% of all humanity lived in cities. The United Nations projects that by the year 2005, 50% of humanity will live in cities. Here we must pause, and reflect that this means that a substantive part of humanity will still remain rural, and that most of those 'farmers' and 'peasants' will be in so-called Third World countries. Nonetheless, as Eric Hobsbawm remarked in his work *The Age of Extremes*, the "most dramatic and far-reaching social change of the second half of the [the twentieth century] is the death of the peasantry" (Hobsbawm, 1994, p. 289). The other side of this reversal of the relationship between city and country is that most megacities will be in what is called the Third World. By the third millennium the 10 most populated metropolises of the World will be neither in Europe nor in the USA.

These trends can be attributed to a variety of factors. The most important factor in the elimination of the rural is the industrialization of agriculture, a process that reached its zenith with the so-called "green revolution" of the 1950s and 1960s. Under the industrialization of agriculture we must understand not just the introduction of better tools, but the homogenization of agricultural production, by which I mean the introduction on a global scale of the *mono-cultivo* (Shiva, 1993). We must also include here the elimination of self-subsistent forms of farming through the elimination of self-renewing bio-diverse eco-systems. One of the most effective ways, however, in which the city has imposed itself over the countryside is

through the projection of images that destabilized the sense of tradition and cultural continuity so fundamental to the rhythms of the countryside. Through television, radio and now the internet, the city assaults the fabric of the countryside. Tradition is undermined by the promises and riches projected by the tube of plenty, the cornucopia of other possibilities: the television, and its world of info-tainment (see Bauman's wonderful discussion of how, under the globalization of entertainment, the Benthamian Panopticon turns into the MacWorld/Infotainment Synopticon (1998a, pp. 53–54)).

Indeed, one of the most characteristic aspects of globalization is what is called the decreasing importance of the local, the state, the national. We therefore need to speak with Jürgen Habermas and Paul Kennedy of a post-national constellation in which sovereign nation-states as territorially localized have become less important, less in control of their own spatiality (Kennedy, 1993; Habermas, 2001). But what is forgotten is that there is a simultaneous process of localization in which place acquires a new significance, certain spaces of course (Featherstone, 1995). The city is the site at which the forces of the local and the global meet: the site where the forces of transnational, finance capital, and the local labour markets and national infra-structures enter into conflict and contestation over the city. As Saskia Sassen writes:

"The city has indeed emerged as a site for new claims: by global capital which uses the city as an 'organizational commodity,' but also by disadvantage sectors of the urban population, which in large cities are frequently as internationalized a presence as is capital. The denationalizing of urban space and the formation of new claims by transnational actors and involving contestation, raise the question — whose city is it?" (Sassen, 1998, p. xx)

The city, in fact, has become the crossroad for new denationalizing politics in which global actors, capitals and moving peoples

enter into conflict across a transnational urban system.

Habermas has noted with acuity that one of the characteristics of the 18th and 19th centuries was their pronounced fears of the “mass”, “the crowd” (Habermas, 2001, p. 39). Such fears were summarized in the title of the prescient work by Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1985). As was noted already, the 18th and the 19th centuries signalled the reversal of the relationship between countryside and city. This reversal meant the rapid urbanization and demographic explosion in cities which accompany the rapid industrialization of certain metropolises of the West: London, Berlin, New York, Chicago, Newark, Mexico City, Porto Alegre; and the non-West: New Dehli, Tokyo, Beijing, Cairo, etc. Urbanization and Industrialization gave rise to the spectre of the irascible, insatiable, uncontrollable mass that would raze everything in its path. Three classical responses emerged: Sorel, and the celebration of the creative power of anarchical and explosive unorganized mass mobilization; the Marxist-Leninist, and the attempt to domesticate and train the creative and transformative power of social unrest through the development of a party machinery that would guide the ire and discontent of gathered masses of unemployed and employed workers; and the conservative and reactionary response of an Edmund Burke, but which is also echoed in the works of philosophers like Heidegger, which disdained and vilified the common folk, the mass, in a simple term: *Das Man*. The crowd, the mass, is consumed and distracted by prattle, and curiosity, as it wallows in the miasma of inauthenticity and cowardness (Fritsche, 1999).

Today such attitudes seem not just foreign, but also unrealistic. Most of our experience is determined by a continuous mingling with crowds, and large, undifferentiated masses of people. We get on the road, and we are confronted with traffic jams, we get on the subway, and people accost and touch us from all directions. We live in continuous friction

with the stranger, the other. May we suggest that the “Other” has become such an important point of departure for philosophical reflection precisely because we exist in such a continuous propinquity with it? Indeed, the Other is no longer simply a phantasmagorical presence, projected and barely discernible beyond the boundaries of the ecumene, the polis and the frontiers of the nation-state. At the same time, the discourse about the “other”, what is called the politics of alterity, marks a shift from the negative discourse of anxiety and fear epitomized in the term “anomie” so well diagnosed by Durkheim, Simmel and Freud, and so aptly described by Christopher Lasch (1979), to the positive discourse of solidarity, inclusion, acceptance, tolerance, citizenship and justice, so well diagnosed and described by Zygmunt Bauman (1998b), Ulrich Beck (1997), Anthony Giddens (1990) and Jürgen Habermas (2001).

Are there any morals to be extracted from this profound transformation in the way humanity in general understands itself. For the longest period of the history of humankind, groups remained both sheltered from and inured to otherness by the solidity and stability of their traditions and their worlds. Cultures remained fairly segregated maps of the world in which the foreign, strange and unknown was relegated beyond the boundaries of the controllable, and surveyable. To this extent, ‘otherness’ was legislated over by religion, the state, nature and even history, namely those centres of gravity of culture and images of the world. In an age in which all traditions are under constant revision, and human temporality converges with the age of the world itself, then ‘otherness’ appears before us as naked, unmediated otherness: we are all others before each other. In other words, neither our sense of identity, nor the sense of difference of the other are given *a priori*, they are always discovered, constituted and dismantled in the very processes of encounter. The other was always constituted for us by extrinsic forces. Now, the other is constituted in the very process of our identity formation, but in a contingent fashion.

We make others as we make ourselves. This reflection links up with some insights that Enrique Dussel has had with respect to the relationship between the emergence of cities and the development of the first codes of ethics: the Hammurabi Code, and the Book N of the Egyptian Book of the Dead (Dussel, 1998). Such codes arose precisely because individuals were thrown into the proximity of each other, and were thus confronted with each other's vulnerability and injurability. The injunction to take care of the poor, the indigent, the orphan, the widow, the invalid, could only arise out of the urban experience of the contiguity with the injurable flesh of the stranger. Today, the experience of the indigent other is of the immigrant, the exiled, the refugee, who build their enclaves in the shadows of the glamorous city of transnational capital (King, 1990; Sassen, 1999). For this reason, the other and the immigrant are interchangeable, but this also raises the issue of the new global city as a space for the representation and formation of post-colonial identities. Geo-cities are spaces for the reconfiguration of image, the imagination and the imaginary, as Arjun Appadurai argued (1996). In this sense, the centrality of the urban experience for humanity means that otherness is not going to be a mere metaphysical, or even phenomenological category and concern. *Under the reign of the city: Otherness has become quotidian and practical.*

*Fourth*, another fundamental point of departure for a phenomenology of globalization will have to be the analysis of the place of technology in our everyday lives. I would like to understand *technology* in two senses. First, in its broadest sense as "the use of scientific knowledge to specify ways of doing things in a *reproducible* way" (Bell, 1976, p. 29). Second, as a prosthesis of the human body. Technology, to paraphrase a wonderful aphorism of William Burroughs, is the mind wanting more body. I will discuss first the former sense of technology, as a scientific specification for the iterable way of doing things. In this sense, then a hospital is

a social technology, like agriculture and cattle raising are material technologies. By the same token, prisons, asylums and ghettos are social technologies. There is, however, something unique about technology in the 20th century, and that is that technology itself has become an object of technology, in other words, the use of science in order to produce ever more efficient ways of doing things in ever more reproducible ways itself has become a technological quest. This technology of technology is what one might call the institutionalization of invention. Alfred North Whitehead noted that "the greatest invention of the 19th century was the invention of the method of invention" (Whitehead, 1925, p. 141). What Whitehead attributes to the 19th century reached its true apogee in the second half of the 20th century with the institutionalization of the research university. While the programme of the research university goes back to the German ideal of the university, it is in the USA that this idea gained its highest formalization and state support. Without question we have to attribute the greatest technological breakthroughs of the 20th century to this unique convergence of the state, the military and the research university: what Eisenhower called the military-industrial complex, and what we now with hindsight should more appropriately call the military-university-industrial complex (Kenney, 1986; Aronowitz, 2000).

The rise of the nation-state also signified the rise of state-sponsored education, and the state university. The university plays a dual role. On the one hand, it has the function of preparing citizens and workers for the material and cultural-political self-reproduction of society. On the other, it has the role of institutionalizing scientific investigation, the invention of invention. Through the university, the state invests in its future ability to transform its material technologies of self-reproduction. Winning Nobel prizes is not just a matter of pride, it is above all a question of institutional power to support immense research budgets whose actual

industrial and technical application might be far off into the future. This is one of the reasons why the USA has remained a world power, despite its apparent military stalemate, namely because it still remains the centre for the production of most technological innovation.

Related to the invention of invention, what I called the institutionalization of the technology of technology, as its other side, is the interpenetration of technology in every aspect of our lives. Even those who are not directly affected by technological revolutions in their daily life are nonetheless indirectly affected insofar as their worlds, economies and cultures are made vulnerable to takeovers and colonization by those who drive the technological revolutions of today. For the longest period of the history of humanity, technology remained distant from the lives and bodies of men and women, not because it did not impact them, but because it did so sporadically and in such tangential ways: fire, the wheel, the printing press, the metal plough, the steam engine, the automobile. Each technological innovation, however, has meant a further interpenetration between tool and human body. With this, I turn to the discussion of technology as prosthesis, the second sense of technology I want to consider in light of a phenomenology of globalization.

A technology is a way of doing things in ways that can be reproduced, again and again, and that therefore can be taught and passed on. Culture is in this sense the most complex and important technology of all. In this sense, a technology is a way for a society to extend itself across time, from generation to generation, century to century (Giddens, 1984, 1987). A technology generally instantiated itself in tools. Tools allow particular individuals to reach beyond the boundaries of their own bodies. A tool is an extension of a particular bodily organ that augments its original performance. Tool and body, however, have remained relatively distinct, even if one can claim that the hand is a product of our invention of tools

(Rothenberg, 1993). Recognition of the distinctness between tool and body does not entail the negation of their dialectical interdependence and co-modification. Their distinctness was sustained by what I have already referred to above as the temporality of humans and the time of the world. When the time of humans and the world converge, what mediates their encounter, tools, has already fused with the body, or has already made the world immediate. Our experience of the world is already so mediated by our technological tools that we cannot distinguish the world from the tool, and these from the body. We are our tools. We are our technological prosthesis because they are the world (Brahm and Driscoll, 1995). But this does not mean that technology is itself transparent. Rather, technology itself has become like our bodies in the sense that we do not know how our livers, hearts or brains work: we just assume that they will do what they were designed to do, and if they break down, then we go to a specialist.

Everywhere we are surrounded by technological devices which have insinuated themselves in our lives and without which we cannot do: the watch, the telephone, the car, the television, but also, toothpaste, X-rays, vaccines, birth control pills, condoms, sun screen, eye-glasses, shavers, purified and chlorinated water, and so on.

What I am talking about can be illustrated by comparing Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in which a creation out of human parts becomes monstrous precisely because it entails the complete instrumentalization of our bodies, and thus a sacrilege of its alleged divine naturalness, and Donna Haraway's borgs, which demonstrate and theorize to what extent we are always already synthetic (Haraway, 1991). There is no nature outside the confines of the laboratory. *Resistance is futile* to the logic of technology because we are all already borg: we are products of our technologies, and nature exists only as an Arcadian fantasy. This reading should not be taken to be suggesting that nature does not

exist in the sense that it is a fiction, the mirage of radical social constructivism. Rather, the point is to highlight the ways in which nature is to be thought of in terms of what today we call the 'recursive loops' between technology and nature, in which nature is already an 'artefact', and 'machines' are natural (Hayles, 1999). Indeed, appropriating Marx's language from his 1844 manuscripts, we have to talk about the humanization of machines, and the mechanization of humanity.

Is there a moral to be extracted by the interpenetration of humans and their technological prosthesis to the point that you cannot distinguish them any longer? I would say that a Heideggerian response to this question is anachronistic and indefensible. On the other hand, a dia-mat, in the sense of Engels's dialectical materialism, will not do either. Science is neither metaphysically bad nor a malleable ideological epiphenomenon. Against these two positions, I would advocate what has been called Kranzberg's law, which reads: "technology is neither good nor bad, nor is it neutral" (Castells, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 65).

I would like to summarize my reflections by suggesting that once a phenomenology of globalization takes seriously the points of departure discussed above, we will discover that globalization might stand for another axial period. This new axial age will be characterized by at least these four themes: first, the perpetual revolutionizing of production technologies has turned into the technology of innovation, in such a way that the generation of capital is relocated to the production of new information technologies and not production and processing of raw materials. Second, because of the almost instantaneous information transmission and reception across the world, and the convergence of natural, historical and personal temporalities, we have the effect of the *de-transcendentalization and temporalization of tradition*. These de-transcendentalizations and temporalizations suggest that our images of the world will be at the reach of our own design. In this sense, we will be able to speak

of the true secularization of the world and its complete humanization. Third is the *routinization and de-metaphysicalization of otherness* brought about by the hyper-urbanization of humanity. Otherness will become a product of society, and in this sense we will have to talk of regimes of alterization. The 'other', then, will become a continuous presence that will require our constant concern and vigilance. Fourth is *the dissolution of the boundary between natural and synthetic, body and tool, technology and nature*. We will have to speak, then, of the age in which humans have become their own creations, and in which the directions of the reproduction of both mind and body, culture and technology, will become a concern of political practice of paramount importance.

The image of the world projected by globalization is one which collapses the differences between biomorphic space-time, social space-time and world space-time: what we see is what we get. To put it in the language of an essay by Theodor Adorno, the history of nature is no different from the history of humanity (Adorno, 1984). Globalization also projects an image of the world in which otherness is not external and intractable, but produced from within. Finally, globalization is an image of the world in which the natural and the social, the created and uncreated, have been brought together under the insight that we have been producing ourselves as we have been producing tools to alter the world. Now, however, the producing of our tools is not different from the production of ourselves and our world. In the image of the world projected by globalization, the world is humanity looking at itself through its eyes, and not the eyes of a god, history or nature.

### III. City of angels

"Who is the observer when it concerns the question about the function of religion: the system of religion itself, or science as an external observer?" (Luhmann, 2000, p. 118)

The kind of phenomenology of globalization that I sketched above allows us to ask about the kinds of challenges religion faces in an age of globalization. For religion appears as a resource of images, concepts, traditions and practices that can allow individuals and communities to deal with a world that is changing around them by the hour (Robertson and Garrett, 1991; Luhmann, 2000). In the new *Unübersichtlichkeit* [unsurveyability] of our global society, religion appears as compendium of intuitions that have not been extinguished by the so-called process of secularization (Mendieta, forthcoming a). Most importantly, however, religion cannot be dismissed or derided because it is the privileged, if not the primary, form in which the impoverished masses of the invisible cities of the world (those cities to which I pointed in the first part of this essay) articulate their hopes as well as critique their world.

The first challenge to religion that our phenomenology of globalization allow us to articulate has to do with the 'de-transcendentalizing of otherness', or what I also would like to call the 'routinization of otherness'. There is a correlation between the way humanity has conceptualized otherness, metaphysically and conceptually, on the one hand, and humanity's relationship to real and concrete otherness, as it has been experienced existentially and phenomenologically, on the other hand. This correlation has been mediated by humanity's decreasing ruralism. In other words, the less rural, and thus the more urban dwelling, humans have become, the less other is the otherness that we can think of or dream up. The suggestion is that the metaphysics of alterity that has guided so much of Western theology, and religious thinking, over the last 2000 years has been determined by a particular asymmetry between the country and the city. For the longest history of humanity most societies have been farming and rural-dwelling communities and associations. Contact between extremely different communities and societies was sporadic and rare, and when contact

did occurred, this was meditated by city dwellers, and the long memory of popular mythologies. But as was noted above in the dawning 21st century most humans will be city dwellers. Furthermore, In the 21st century most humanity will be conglomerated in the mega-urbes of the Third World. Under this circumstance, the holy other, the absolutely other will be deflated. Alterity and the extraordinary, what can also be called the *tremendum*, are de-mystified and de-metaphysicalized (Habermas, 1992; Placher, 1996). Either everyone will be a stranger, or no one will be because we will all be strangers in a city of strangers. In such a situation, otherness will have become a routine, an un-extra-ordinary event. How, then are we to think divine alterity, the otherness of the holy, in a situation in which ontologically and metaphysically all alterity has been deflated, demoted, rendered normal, levelled to the cotidian? Are we in a situation of having to "risk a new idea of holiness"? as Barry Taylor, Pastor at the Sanctuary Church in Santa Monica, put it. This would have to be a holiness which is not other worldly, but a holiness which is about the difference and uniqueness of others, those who are our everyday other, with whom we ride the subway, with whom we walk the streets of populated mega-urbes of the new age, with whom we share in anonymity the crowded spaces of the new cities. The real and metaphorical wilderness of the world, of its jungles and forests, of its undiscovered continents and untamed seas, of its unmapped deserts and unnavigated rivers, were excuses as well instigations to go searching for god beyond the familial, the urbane, the too close and already 'domesticated'. God was beyond the world, other than the world. Now, the question is, how do we discover the other in the mundane difference of every fellow human being, and the crowded city of strangers?

The second challenge has to do with the city as locus of the culture of consumption, as the site for an ethos of immediacy, hedonism and hyper-excitation. Sassen

speaks of the city as the crossroads of a confrontation between the flows of capital and the flows of peoples. One of the ways these flows clash in cities is through the confrontation between cultures, that is, between different modalities of life. The more people become urban dwellers, the more people are exposed to the cornucopia of cultural possibilities. It is not just that more people are in cities, it is also that more people are seeking to participate in the standards of life promised by urban dwelling. The challenges are unprecedented. We are presently choking in our own refuse, in our own garbage. The psychological toil must also be unprecedented. The level of unmet expectations, unfilled desires, the gap between universally promised but exorbitantly expensive commodities that shattered self-images and worth and that are available to a relatively small fraction of the world population, has grown exponentially. There is another underside to the city as the crossroads of the clash of modalities of life. The more cities grow, the more they exert their pull on the so-called hinterland, the rural areas. The more agriculture is mechanized and industrialized, the more we adopt biotechnology, the more superfluous “farmers” become. At the same time, the expansion of telecommunications, television and paid for television, and satellite connections have made it easier to link up and peer into the “tube of plenty”, to use that wonderful phrase by Erik Barnouw (1990 [1975]). The city literally and metaphorically consumes its hinterland, its outlying areas of supply: it consumes its resources and produce, but also its cultures and its peoples.

It is perhaps unnecessary to underscore again that most of the consumption of rural resources is taking place in the metropolises of the so-called First World. So, not only must we address the rampant and rapacious consumerism of cities in general, but also the particularly scandalous and grotesque asymmetry between the consumption of First World cities and Third World cities. This issue becomes particularly pressing when in

the so-called advanced nations of the world, we have thinkers, intellectuals and critics talking about a politics and culture of inclusion and tolerance (Habermas, 1998). This politics of inclusion is articulated with the best intentions in mind. The assumption guiding it is that people throughout the world would be better if they could participate more equitably in the same kinds of so-called basic needs and luxuries that we westerners enjoy. But there is something profoundly disingenuous and deleteriously naïve about such a view. In some cases the poverty of those across the world to whom we would like to extend our standard of living is due precisely to our luxury. That which we want to share is the cause of the privation we want to alleviate. Thus, perhaps the agenda should not be one of inclusion, but of dismantling the system that occasioned in the first place the exclusions we benefited and continue to benefit from.

In this situation, then, the challenge becomes how to think of an urban culture of frugality. The challenge is how to translate the religious message and teaching of poverty as a holy way, as a holy calling, into a secular value, a secular calling. Another way of putting it would be, how do we translate the visions of the desert fathers, St Francis of Assisi, Mohandas Gandhi, into an urban vision for a spiritually starving youth. Or, alternatively, if we think of what Arnold Toynbee and Eric Hobsbawm said about the 20th century, namely that its greatest achievement was the expansion of the middle class, then the goal for the 21st century should be the expansion of a globalized “living level class”. In other words, we have to develop a culture for which the greatest achievement is not that everyone else will live like us, but that we will live at the level that allows the most people to share in the most fundamental goods: potable water, clean air, infant nutrition to sustain healthy standards of unstunted growth, and the possibility of basic education. Here, I would have to say that I concur with Hardt and Negri on their canonization of Assisi as a saint in the

hagiography of revolutionary militancy (2000, p. 413).

The third challenge that our phenomenology of globalization allows us to elucidate has to do with one of its central locus of analysis, namely the city. If cities have become the sites where the unbundling of the state takes place, that is, if we take cities to be the sites for the de-nationalizing of the national, and if we at the same time take the city as the locus of an emergent juridification, or process of legalization of new forms of relationships, then are we not in need of having to re-think the relationship between the legal and political structures of the emergent supra-national state and the para- or extra-statist “church”? Another way of putting it would be to note that the church, at least in the West, antecedes the modern nation-state. In fact, the church was the state, and that partly because of this, the quest for modernity, the process of modernization, entailed a secularization of state and legal structures. In the process, the church’s sphere of operation became restricted or constrained by the spaces drawn by the boundaries of nation-states. Churches and denominations became identified with national boundaries, which took place notwithstanding the underlying and fundamental universalist thrust of Christianity. If we accept Sassen’s analysis, which we must given the overwhelming evidence, then we are inescapably put in the situation of having to re-think the relationship between the church and the state. In fact, as the nation-states of the 19th and 20th century are unbundled, and new forms of political and legal rights emerge in de-territorialized and de-nationalized forms of political self-determination, then the church itself will have to face its de-nationalization and de-territorialization. At the same time, however, one of the fundamental conditions of the presence of the church in the 21st century will have to be that it must have learned the lessons of the last 500 years of colonialism, imperialism and post-colonialism. This means that the challenge is dual. On the one hand, the new church must find a place beyond the nation-states of political

modernity; but on the other hand, it must do so with a post-colonialist and post-imperialist attitude. In the age of global transformations, the new church cannot and will not be able to serve as an agent of globalization for the new imperial masters that began to profile themselves in the horizon, namely a united front of European nations (an expanded NATO), a technological elite bent on re-designing nature, and a cosmopolitan nobility without controls, allegiances or consciences.

Fourth, and finally, I think that another extremely important challenge has to do with the insight that cities are the places where cultures come to cultivate each other. In other words, cities are the places where old cultures are cannibalized but also carnivalized, where old cultures which are dying come to be renewed, but also where new cultures are produced from the remains of old ones (Hamacher, 1997). Cities are germinals of new cultures. Indeed, just as we are very likely to find micro-climates in most global cities, we are likely to find cultural enclaves: little Italys, Chinatowns, Japantowns, little Bombays, etc. These places are where the centripetal and centrifugal forces of homogenization and heterogenization interact to produce new cultural formations. Underlying this new cultural genesis is its evident and almost presentist character. The processes of cultural genesis take place right in front of our eyes. Cultures are not millennial sedimentations; and even that which is peddled as the oldest, is a present-day version of the old. Most importantly, cultures have become something we produce, and choose; cultures are something which we either nurture and preserve, or abandon and disavow. In all of these cases, we are not passive, but active agents of transformation. In this situation, the challenge for the new church, for an urban ministry for the 21st century, is how to develop an ecclesiology of cultural diversity. How will the new church participate in this cultural genesis that is germinating in global cities, while retaining a sense of identity? Or, conversely, how will it retain a sense of cultural identity without

becoming either ethnocentric or jingoistic about its cultural bequest, without contributing to the ossification of its own culture? On what terms can the new church participate in the creation of new cultures and the preservation of successful ones?

## Conclusion

Cities are the vortex of the convergence of the processes of globalization and localization. Cities are epitomes of glocalization, to use Robertson's language (1994). They are also sites of the sedimentation of history. In this essay I have sought to advance the research agenda that would take the "invisible cities" of the so-called Third World as their primary object of analysis. At the same time, however, I have urged that we look at the cities in the developed, industrialized world through the eyes of their invisible inhabitants and citizens: immigrants, ethnic minorities, disenfranchised groups, workers, women and the youth. There are invisible cities within the cities that are so visible in most urban theory and analysis, as well as invisible cities that remain unseen because they are not on the horizon of the academic agendas of researchers in the universities of the developed world.

In tandem, I have suspended judgement on whether to be for or against globalization, not because I do not think that we can make moral judgments in this case, but because I think we need to broaden our analyses of this new order of things. I developed some general points of departure for a phenomenological analysis of globalization. This particular approach, I think, exhibits how "globalization" can and ought to become a matter for serious philosophical reflection. I have identified the issues of alterity, temporality, tradition, the distinction between the natural and the synthetic, as *philosophemes* that are substantively impacted by the processes of globalization. Yet, the phenomenological approach I articulate is deliberate in assuming a partic-

ular perspective or angle of approach. I have sought to delineate a phenomenology of globalization *from below*. The world does not disclose itself in the same way to all subjects, much less globalization. Thus, the phenomenology here presented urges us to look at the world from below, from the perspective of those who seem to be more adversely than beneficially affected by the processes that make up globalization.

This is what the "below" in the subtitle of the essay pointed to: the below of the poor and destitute, the below of those who are not seen, and do not register in the radar of social theory. Furthermore, I have tried to further qualify that perspective from below by focusing my attention on the issue of religion. Religion, clearly, can mean many things, but at the very least it means "the sigh of the oppressed" and the "encyclopedic compendium" of a heartless world, as Marx put it (1994, p. 28), if only because it is the form in which the destitute, the most vulnerable in our world, express their critiques, as well as hopes. I have argued that we ought to look at cities as germinals of new cultures, and that if we want to trace the emergent cultures of those "below", then we better look at religious movements. In what ways are the religious language of the oppressed and disenfranchised of the invisible cities of globalization critiques and resistances to globalization? This is clearly a research desideratum, rather than a description or even assessment.

## Note

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*Eduardo Mendieta, University of San Francisco*