

## HEGELIAN DIALECTICS AND ETHNOCLASS DIFFERENCES

### THE SPATIALISED POLITICS OF THE GUARANI-KAIOWA

#### *DIALÉCTICA HEGELIANA Y DIFERENCIAS DE ETNOCLASE*

*La política espacializada de los Guaraní-Kaiowá*

#### *DIALÉTICA HEGELIANA E DIFERENÇAS DE ETNOCLASSE*

*A política espacializada dos Guaraní-Kaiowá*

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### ABSTRACT

Difference is not an epiphenomenon of socio-spatial relations, but a genuine worldmaking driving-force, provided that it is the handling of difference that paves the way to specific interactions that end up shaping society and, ultimately, space. There exists not merely ‘a world of difference’ but a world because, and out of, differences. This article offers a neo-Hegelian analysis of the spatial basis of politico-economic and ethnic-social differences, making use of the striking example of anti-difference violence suffered by indigenous peoples under the hegemony of financial-rentier capitalism. There are two main pillars of socio-spatial difference, ethnicity and class, which co-determine each other and eventually result in hybrid, ethnoclass differences held by all humans and according to their specific and general circumstances. The socio-spatial trajectory of the Guarani-Kaiowa indigenous nation, in the center of Brazil, is emblematic of the dialectical basis of ethnoclass differences, and also of the political potentiality of difference.

Keywords: social movements. indigenous struggles. indigenous studies. geography. anthropology.

### RESUMEN

La diferencia no es un epifenómeno de las relaciones socioespaciales, sino un verdadero motor de la construcción del mundo, ya que es el manejo de la diferencia lo que abre el camino a interacciones específicas que terminan configurando la sociedad y, en última instancia, el espacio. No hay sólo ‘un mundo de diferencias’, sino un mundo por y fuera de las diferencias. Este artículo ofrece un análisis neohegeliano de la base espacial de las diferencias político-económicas y étnico-sociales, utilizando el ejemplo llamativo de la violencia antidiferencial sufrida por los pueblos indígenas bajo la hegemonía del capitalismo rentista-financiero. Hay dos pilares principales de la diferencia socioespacial, la etnicidad y la clase, que co-determinan y eventualmente dan como resultado diferencias híbridas de etnoclase experimentadas por todas las personas y de acuerdo con sus circunstancias específicas y generales. La trayectoria socioespacial de la nación indígena Guaraní-Kaiowá,

en el centro de Brasil, es emblemática de la base dialéctica de las diferencias etnoclasistas y también del potencial transformador de la diferencia.

Palabras clave: movimientos sociales. luchas indígenas. estudios indígenas. geografía. antropología.

## RESUMO

Diferença não é um epifenômeno das relações socioespaciais, mas uma verdadeira força motriz da construção do mundo, uma vez que é o manejo da diferença que abre caminho para interações específicas que acabam por moldar a sociedade e, em última instância, o espaço. Existe não apenas ‘um mundo de diferenças’, mas um mundo por causa e fora das diferenças. Este artigo oferece uma análise neo-Hegelianiana da base espacial das diferenças político-econômicas e étnico-sociais, valendo-se do exemplo marcante da violência anti-diferença sofrida pelos povos indígenas sob a hegemonia do capitalismo financeiro-rentista. Existem dois pilares principais da diferença socioespacial, etnia e classe, que se co-determinam e, eventualmente, resultam em diferenças híbridas de etnoclasse vivenciadas por todas as pessoas e de acordo com suas circunstâncias específicas e gerais. A trajetória socioespacial da nação indígena Guarani-Kaiowa, no centro do Brasil, é emblemática da base dialéctica das diferenças de etnoclasse e da potencialidade transformadora da diferença.

Palavras-chave: movimentos sociais. lutas indígenas. estudos indígenas. geografía. antropologia.

### **Difference instrumentalized into indifference**

We certainly live in a strange world where the most important social and spatial differences are tacitly negated by precisely those who instrumentalize and benefit from their concealment. The most striking differences are unnoticed, omitted or attacked, only to be promptly reinstated, reinforced and then silenced. This unsettling planet, where so many differences are ignored and ill-managed, is inhabited by more than six billion people, who are systematically characterized by academics and political leaders as members of a globalized, although highly abstract and undifferentiated, society. The contemporary configuration of the world, mirroring the Western model of consumption and waste, is extolled as the best possible socio-economic and ethical order and, moreover, the culmination of history so far. This is the triumphant argument from the top, from those who reject the richness of differences; in other words, difference is advantageous as long as it can be quantified, profited from and ultimately sanitized by indifference. Higher levels of labor exploitation and social degradation are rationalized by the stifling and control of difference, which ultimately comes to haunt society as a whole. This strange reality, as revealed by Bauman (2017), is so distressing that, for the marginalized majority, the dream is not in the future; only the past holds any hope. What has already happened is more easily registered by each individual, whilst the future is nebulous and disturbingly contingent on what the rest of society chooses to do or not to do. Therefore, if the future is uncertain and the present uncomfortable, it makes sense to depict those seen as ‘other’ as degraded versions of what ‘we’ have or want to become. How people respond to difference is central to how they see themselves, who they want to become, and what they try to avoid.

This paper offers a conceptual (neo-Hegelian) analysis of the spatial basis of politico-economic and ethnic-social differences, making use of the striking example of anti-difference violence suffered by indigenous peoples under the contemporary hegemony of financial-rentier capitalism (Bresser-Pereira, 2007). Its departure point is that, rather than a descriptor (the predicate of a subject), difference is a mediator of relations and a facilitator of connection or disjuncture (an essence turned into a subject). There is, therefore, a *necessity of difference in the world*, as a decisive ontological factor that sustains cohesion or social breakdown. Difference is not static or above social relations, but is a catalyst either

for approximation or distancing in relation to what is being differentiated against. Difference is, by definition, a relationship between more than one thing, but it is also a reflexive return to the one, as something that either reinforces a presumed contrast with the other or helps to mitigate the distance that seemed to separate them. This is existential tension between being something and not wanting to be something else. There are, in addition, gradations, intensities and qualifications of difference that produce unstable degrees of proximity. In the end, the need for difference represents lived proof of the immanence of difference in the world. For all these reasons, socially constructed patterns of differentiation have great political relevance, but they have also been clouded by the challenge of dealing with other perspectives on life, economy and society. World geography contains great diversity and major contrasts, but attitudes towards difference, including other values, ethnicities, religions and morals, are not consistent but rather reflect how each nation, social class and individual deals with their perceived and represented condition. The turbulent trajectory of difference reveals an endless struggle to reconcile the factors that unify a social group with the barriers that prevent constructive interaction with others.

A very concrete, striking sense of the biased treatment of difference can be grasped by standing near a fence that divides an indigenous reservation from surrounding private farms, a relatively easy exercise to undertake in many parts of North and South America. On one side of the fence are artificial pastures and fields with homogenous, often transgenic, crops cultivated on soils prepared with the use of heavy machinery, fossil fuels and high doses of agrochemicals (fertilizers and pesticides). On the other, a much more complex ecosystem with shrubs, grasses and trees (the actual composition depending on external pressure and past uses of the land) and a diversity of animals and microorganisms that is several orders of magnitude greater. The landscape managed by the indigenous communities also holds diverse knowledges, experiences and practices cherished by people with distinctive features and languages, although ‘at face value’ their socio-economic condition is typically comparable with the material destitution of poor peasant communities and the urban homeless. Contemporary agribusiness farms are homogenized spaces where a huge amount of capital circulates (funded by bank loans and foreign investment) but very little is left behind for local communities, apart from socio-ecological impacts. Most technical operations are developed and tested in agronomic research centers located thousands of kilometers away, by scientists who have never heard of the region where the agribusiness farms are located. Agribusiness is fundamentally predicated upon estrangement and subsequent indifference to the discriminatory differences created in the course of agrarian development. As Manuel and Posluns (2019: 188) argue, “it is not necessary to travel all the way to the Arctic to see the traditional colonial system operating with the full assistance of modern technology.”

Large agribusiness farms, enthusiastically celebrated by politicians, economists, urban elites and the dominant mass media, are monuments of indifference to the socio-ecological differences that ultimately sustain them, and which have been viciously appropriated to satisfy exogenous demands. It is easy to observe this paradox in the agribusiness-dominated regions of the US Mid-West, California, Southern Spain, Argentina, South Africa or anywhere in Brazil where monoculture plantations continue to expand. On 13 June 2012, the conservative Brazilian magazine *Veja* published an article with the title ‘Guess Which the Indian Land Is’, compare the supposed progress of agribusiness with the supposed backwardness of indigenous lands in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul. The key message of the piece is that indigenous families and communities in the region are desolately poor because they have not accepted the ‘rational’ solution of agribusiness production (and the few exceptions, indigenous individuals who participate in commercial agriculture, are treated as examples to be followed). According to the magazine, poverty is a consequence of indigenous people’s primitive way of life, and in the rare cases where land has been returned to its ancestral inhabitants, the result has been a total waste of land and opportunities. Replicating elements of the old ideologies brought by the Iberian conquerors after Columbus and Álvares Cabral, the material misery of the native population is presented as basically their own fault (in the history of the American continent, victims are always considered guilty of causing their own fate). According to this narrative, the only viable alternative would be for indigenous people to surrender their domestic and professional lives to market-based relations, as championed by businesspeople and large-scale landowners. *Veja* makes no mention of the fact that this proposed

solution only benefits a small minority of the non-indigenous population, and is based on increasing social and ecological degradation.

It all means that difference is not an epiphenomenon of socio-spatial relations, but a genuine *worldmaking driving-force*, provided that it is the handling of difference that paves the way to specific interactions that end up shaping society and, ultimately, space. There exists, therefore, not merely ‘a world of difference’ but *a world because, and out of, differences*. People understand and react to those deemed different or not different in ways that either reinforce or challenges the shared reality of the world. To be is to be something and not to be something else, which exists as the different; moreover, as we will discuss below, things are more complicated because existence is ontologically dialectical: something is and is not at the same time (and these poles of interaction produce collectivity and its spatial conformation). Consequently, it is necessary to consider the whole, always unfinished, historical and geographical process that produces difference; difference can be understood as the interconnected trajectory of parts and the whole that led to a perennially evolving reality, and also underpins the immanence of its transformation (because of immanence, the future is immanently what it must be). As famously argued by Hegel (1977: 11), “The True is the whole.” When emphasizing the importance of the whole, Hegel (1977: 79) is not thinking of a static reality; he claims that truth is realized in its process of unfolding: as he repeatedly argued, “the object has developed through the movement of consciousness in a such a way that consciousness is involved in that development.” Hegel set himself the ambitious task of eventually organizing all possible thoughts about the world, from mechanics to anthropology and politics. This was a sizeable target, even for the most formidable thinker of European modernity, considered by Nancy (2018: 11) “*le penseur inaugural du monde contemporain*”). Hegel’s theory on being, reason and interdependency probably represents the most insightful and sophisticated tool available to interrogate and explain difference.

### The difference Hegel makes

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel (1977: 287) proposes that to be different is to act, and action leads to both recognition and consciousness, because “individuality and action constitute the principle of individuality as such.” Action is already inserted in individuality, which itself results from action. According to Hegel (1977: 297), self-consciousness must indeed “alienate itself from itself” in order to secure the character of a universal. For Hegel, difference is what presupposes such interaction and creates a space to advance human consciousness of itself and the world. Reason (as a nexus of agency, as a subject) is a collective project, never fully realized and fraught with possibilities because of the interaction between self-conscious agents. There is unity in “the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: ‘I’ that is ‘We’ and ‘We’ that is ‘I’” (Hegel, 1977: 110). The reality of the world is certainly not merely the sum of its constituent parts, but rather the productive interaction between individual, differentiated elements, and this additional, ‘extra’ dimension is the interdependence between the whole and the parts. The generic is contained in the specific, but the dialectic continues in the integral constitution of the universal by the particulars. Each moment of the dialectic is an interminable, non-teleological play of oppositions without resting places, which defies today’s ideologies of non-contradiction, or the mirage of affirmative action (Jameson, 2017). As Badiou (2012: 85) expands, “a world is a regime of relations of identities and differences.” Difference is, thereby, the ‘name of the game’ or, in other words, to be alive is to be different together with many others with various levels of sameness and contrast. Unfortunately, there is still today a great deal of misunderstanding and misjudgment about the profound politico-spatial implications of difference.

An appreciation of the ontological priority of difference can in no way presuppose or imply a convergence towards the middle ground of liberal politics. On the contrary, as differences come about before and through interaction, they are a nexus of perceivance, reaction and dispute that disrupts implicit consensus. Socio-political activity, or the lack of it, is predicated upon perceptions of old and new differences positioned in space and associated with spatial conditions. In that regard, an enormous

amount can be learned from (and, more importantly, together with and in relation to!) the lived and embodied experience of social groups marginalized in the process of Western-based modernization and capitalist development. As already alluded to above, this is particularly true for indigenous peoples, each with a unique attachment to ancestral places and bearers of socio-spatial practices learned and cultivated over many generations. The politicization of differences is critical for the thousands of communities around the world with claims to indigeneity because, among many other reasons, they have to deal with processes of discrimination and indifference on a daily basis. According to Žižek (2013), indifference is the fundamental form of violence inflicted by capitalism, given that it is a violence attributed systemically and anonymously. The struggle of indigenous nations is particularly challenging in the sense that they have been forced to fight for equal basic rights in order to secure some socio-political inclusion while simultaneously striving to maintain their unique practices, languages and knowledge. This is a joint struggle for equality through difference, which is crucial for both mitigation of and compensation for accumulated abuses and losses. More important than legal or anthropological determinations of identity markers and the search for a supposed authenticity, for indigenous communities the main issue is the need to embrace diversity and rethink conventional roles, needs and timeframes.

This interaction between different beings will necessarily be contradictory, because it will naturally reflect their identities and differences. However, the most important argument – contrasting with the unitarianism of Spinoza and the non-contradictory rationalism of Kant – is that the individual himself or herself is contradictory. But this contradiction is an inescapable feature of life and the main element of logical reasoning. Difference is contradiction, but it starts with the individual and expands into the contradictory interaction with other individuals and the universal, which both constitutes the individual and shapes the universal. For Hegel (1977: 142- 143), difference “is a *plurality* of categories” and “in their *plurality* they possess otherness in contrast to the pure category.” It constitutes a “*negative unity* of the differences... that excludes from itself both the differences as such, as well as that first *immediate* pure unity as such.” The singular individual is a transition to an external reality, and consciousness is able to apprehend that it is a unity that is “referred to an ‘other’, which in being, has vanished, and in vanishing also comes into being again.” Hegel’s ontology (and his phenomenology) not only stabilizes contradictions like this, but places contradiction at the center of the comprehension of and action upon the world. Croce (1915: 19) found a ‘Eureka’ moment in the solution offered by Hegel to the problem of oppositional difference, namely: “the opposites are opposed to one another, but they are not opposed to unity.” This unity is a synthesis, a movement and a space for further development, considering that ‘becoming’ for Hegel is a synthesis of opposites, not of identities (although Croce also considers the Hegelian equivalence between the ‘theory of opposites’ and the ‘theory of distincts’ to be an “essential error”, because the dialectical method cannot be applied to those parts of reality that do not have an antagonistic character; however, Croce ignores the fact that Hegel never denied the existence of relations of diversity, but simply considered opposition to be deeper than diversity, as pointed out by Abazari, 2020).

Hegel’s more notable treatment of difference, as McGowan (2019) explains, is to claim that the being itself is contradictory and must deal with this inherent contradiction through reason (i.e. progressive, methodical logical thinking). According to Hegel (1977), the reality of the world is a flux that is expressed according to the movement of forces, with the antithesis between differences necessarily resolved in this flux (which is itself qualitatively “different from the nature of philosophical truths”, cf. Hegel 1977: 23). If for Hegel reason is more than mere understanding – because there is no fixed correspondence between reality and representation, which rather requires a self-conscious reflection – the production of space is exactly how the gap between reason and understanding, the basis of human resourceful activity, can be collectively seized and acted upon. As interpreted by Heidegger (1988: 122), understanding lies in the movement of the parts and is posited in the difference between space and time, which are distinguished from each other in movement. It is in space, and through the movement of space and time, that differences are materialized, rationalized and transgressed. The dialectical association between the universal and the particular is, ultimately, a relation across scales (i.e. unique-generic, local-universal) and is revealed in the manifold social interactions that produce space (because space is



fundamentally the myriad forms of convergent or antagonistic interactions). Difference is at the center of the interactions that produce space, and it is also the precondition for these relations to unfold. It is socially produced space that allows us to make sense of a fundamental impasse: the contrast between enabling (as concurrence and synergy) and disabling (as inequality and injustice) differences.

### **Relations of Ethnoclass Difference: In and Through Space**

As we saw above, difference is not a static attribute to measure social distances, but an intrinsically relational phenomenon and a dynamic force that fosters either an association or separation depending on the self-consciousness of those involved. Because difference starts in the actuality of the individual's outer and inner features that flourish vi-à-vis other people and social groups, Hegelian dialectic is invaluable for interrogating the complex reality of the world shaped by the perennial interplay between differences and those who are or want to be different. The being exists amidst a spiral of interacting processes puling in various directions and its existence is constantly reshaped through an interplay with the other and with itself. Pure, isolated difference is a myth, a figment of the imagination, hence the importance of Hegelian tension between nature and spirit, and his systematic insistence on non-binary positions and on ontological openness (i.e. no room for the 'thing-in-itself' or to 'either/or' distinctions). Difference, according to Hegel, is consequence of self-estrangement and externalization of the self, not because of self-serving interests but exactly because of the self's incompleteness and the need to be actualized in the other, who is also incomplete. Difference is in the act of negation which involves the other in function of the self, transforming both together through the negation of that negation.

To be a 'good Hegelian' now demands a renewed dialectical effort to cover new ground and harvest what was unripe in Hegel's *chef d'œuvre*. A main challenge is certainly to mobilize Hegelian theory to confront the late capitalist socio-spatiality characterized by a mass cultural mentality predicated upon homogeneous universals and equality contained in market transactions. What prevails today is the membership into a web of relationships that are supposedly inclusive, but in effect indifferent to the condition of peoples and places. Dominant social groups, because of their power, have the ability to assert and normalize such massively exclusionary socio-spatial differences disguised as figments of equality. As a result, politics is typically circumscribed to formal rights and to difference as purely personal attributes, at the expense of communal experiences and collective consciousness. Denying differences can considerably facilitate political controls, whilst the manipulation of differences can equally lead to subordination and repression (such as segregation because of ethnic, spatial or religious identities). That constitutes an attempt to *instrumentalize difference* according to the most powerful interests, as an imposition of *difference in itself* against the prospect of reclaiming of *difference for us* (i.e. on the terms of the majority whose differences were instrumentalized). Instrumentalization aims at transforming differences into something politically inconsequential. Such was the experience when Britain was described as a multicultural society during the Labor administration early in the century (despite persistent injustices and inability to secure effective ethnic and class-based integration). Multiculturalism is a misleading goal that, ultimately, renders difference commensurate in a shared orthodoxy (Bocarejo, 2012), failing to discuss power and inequality but typically used to improve the acceptability of exploitative development strategies (Maher, 2015).

The spatiality of instrumentalized differences and of the resulting indifferences can be summarized in three main 'theses' or propositions. The first is that *relations of difference are configured and evolve according to the social production of space as a collectively lived experience*. As extensively demonstrated by geographers since at least Élisée Reclus and Carl Sauer, social interaction produces space and the spatial setting that results from this interaction equally affects social life. More importantly, the production of space brings forth universalisms and particularisms, which become wrought into a spatial setting that is constantly unrolling. If for Hegel human existence is consolidated in reason and for Marx the totality of human existence is given by labor relations, those totalities can be really comprehended as spatialized relations of difference. Spirit is, in that sense, the essence of space. Space is the consolidation of reason and labor through the convergence of multiple, disputed differences.

Social and interpersonal differences reflect spatial practices and spatial divisions, but these also take part in the collective production and contestation of space; as argued by Lefebvre (1991), space is immanent in politicised social relations. Differences in and through space are also manifested across places and scales (according to the Hegel logic, any particular space is also a universal and only exists as part of the universal). Local differences produce the nearest space, which is itself connected and conditioned by higher spatial scales (themselves shaped with wider, national and international, social differences). A spatial configuration is not merely the result of random social relations, but the very syntax of people's associations and disputes because of their differences. By the same token, space is a conditional and contingent situation (with a transient sense of equilibrium that is represented on a map or cartogram) that is always prone to be challenged and outdone. "The Here pointed out, to which I hold fast, is similarly a this Here which, in fact, is not this Here, but Before and Behind, and Above and Below, a Right and Left. (...) The Here, which is supposed to have been pointed out, vanishes in other Heres, but these likewise vanish" (Hegel, 1977: 64).

If place is the 'petrification' of time (in the terminology of Vallega, 2006, following Reclus), space is equally the condensation of accumulated and anticipated social changes which are necessary activated because of difference. Space is what has changed, what needs to change and what is prevented from changing because of instrumentalized relations of difference. That because space is itself the outcome of social differentiations and, concomitantly, where differences are enacted and could be potentially transgressed. Space is, thus, the realm of lived concreteness, openness and the possibility of social change. According to Massey (2005: 151), the "multiplicity and the chance of space here in the constitution of place provide (an element of) that inevitable contingency which underlies the necessity for the institution of the social and which, at a moment of antagonism, is revealed in particular fractures which pose the question of the political." This process of change is never neutral, but enfolds according to the balance of power and the predominant ideology. Space is therefore the dimension of multiple trajectories and the simultaneity of the many stories-so-far. It is also where the hopes for the future can be articulated, as in the case of national development of personal betterment. Space is, thus, a sphere of flows and heterogeneity, as much as relations, negotiations, practices of engagement. According to Hegel, the gap between essence and appearance is never completed, and in this case space is never fully itself, but always open to challenge and transformation. That is even more the case considering that people are spatial agents, who grasp and simultaneously disidentify (get distance) from the existing order to project an alternative future that brings elements of the past. For Hegel, the distance between the real (lived) and the immanent (projected dimension of reality) must be filled by and in space. Space is read through movement because the particular cannot be reached by language (because this belongs to consciousness, which is inherently universal) but only through experience, which is dynamic and localized. Hegel (2010) argues that contradiction is an ontological feature of the world, which is collectively produced and experienced, something we can call 'produced space' (after Lefebvre), that is, space as contradiction, with partial truths that form not the full truth of the whole, but a whole that is also partially true and prone to be contested.

Our second main proposition is that *patterns and practices of difference are maintained and renovated in space primarily following the exercise of power and the hegemony of the stronger segments of society*. According to Holt and Bowlby (2019), relations of difference endure because of a spatial contingency of encounters in which advantages and disadvantages are challenged or reinforced according to power imbalances. Politics certainly plays a key role in the organization and maintenance of spatialized social practices, but it is also nurtured by the spatialized configuration of social action according to the most powerful interests. For Massey (2005), space is the visible and sensuous dimension of the multiplicity, what means that space is intrinsically political and reflect 'geometries of power.' A spatial configuration is not only a canvas that exhibits differences, but it may likewise conceal differences between asymmetrical or oppositional social groups. Mainstream development nowadays is indeed a very selective spatial phenomenon, given that the evolution of socio-spatial relationships associated with the modernization of the world has only included a fraction of society, what normally increases hierarchies and stratification (Luhmann, 1982). This has to do with ideas about consent and purity imposed from those in control, even is only implicitly. Evidently, the main sources of politico-economic power and the

key producer of difference encrusted in space continue to be the capitalist relations of domination, alienation and exploitation. It was indicated by Katz (2009: 243) that “capitalist accumulation works in and through the production of difference in space (...) at different scales.” Space, according to Harvey (2006), is an attribute of all use values (the life between narrow market transactions), but though the dynamics of commodification and accumulation new spatial configurations arise according to the needs of capital. It means a strategic conversion of the pluralism of use values, which reflect the diversity of different local socio-ecological experiences, into the monotonic interchangeability of exchange value.

The circulation of capital and the expansion of capitalist relations not only work in space, but through the destabilization and regulation of multiple identities and social practices. Yet, one of the main secrets of capitalist modernization is precisely its capacity to conceal the importance and the constant increase of socio-spatial differences behind the abstract universality of market transactions. Difference becomes, then, more than a locus of dispute but the basis of private asset ownership and of the circulation and accumulation of capital. There exists a simultaneous discursive production of space in which power is exercised through spatial practices and their representations in order to secure mainly the interests of privileged social groups (Dunn, 2001). The modern, capitalist world is basically predicated on certain differences, mobilized to pave the way for equalized economic basis that are required in order to promote value extraction and unrestricted trade. According to Qian and Wei (2020: 251), capitalist development depends exactly on the absorption and appropriation of local specificities, which assembles and reorders “existing registers of differences – local practices, relations, values and norms, but also differentiations in economy, education, health, social and human capital, etc.” Consequently, socio-spatial difference in a capitalist society does not explicate things in itself, but it itself has to be explained vis-à-vis class-based and other forms of identity positionalities (as recommended by Katz, social theory needs to account for class differences and the uneven capitalist development in direct connection with the specific circumstances of gender, sexuality, racism, patriarchy, etc.). The interrogation of difference is directly related to the rationality and the internal contradictions of capitalist relations of production and reproduction.

The third thesis on space and difference is that *circumstances fraught with political antagonisms increasingly impact spatialized relations of difference, although the resulting tensions will accumulate over time and eventually trigger manifold reactions*, which will be manifested through actions taken by those dissatisfied with the treatment of their differences or willing to reclaim what has been denied by other social groups. The production of space is profoundly, and inescapably, political and such political dynamics are involved in the legitimization or transformation of hierarchical patterns of difference. Political actions have historical and psychological roots, but are catalyzed and concretized in space, as acts for or against certain differences that will be again reinscribed in space. The interruption of the prevailing order, as in the case of strikes, uprisings, mobilization, or elections, are interventions that express spatial presuppositions and aspirations for the future. The configuration of the political into the engine of contestation is consequence of the autonomous realization (self-consciousness) of deep political connotation of differences. The reassertion of differences can result in opportunities to challenge a given state of affairs, in particular the exclusionary and oppressive hegemony of capitalist relations. Capitalist modernity is founded on the careful instrumentalization of socio-spatial differences, which are exacerbated and reinforced, or minimized and circumscribed when is required. However, and crucially, there is ‘more and new things under the sun’ – paraphrasing Ecclesiastes – than capitalism will ever be able to completely enthrall. Despite the ideological imperative to convert everything to the undifferentiated grammar of money and political control (including human health, ecological processes and even the atmosphere, vis-à-vis carbon markets), there is *always a surplus or excess of difference* (autonomous differences cherished and preserved by marginalized social groups) that is not fully incorporated in the homogenizing flows of commodification and exploitation.

This ‘excess’ of difference is the politicization of the residual differences mentioned above, which are acted upon and pave the way to multiple forms of contestation at various scales of socio-spatial interaction. As put by Massey (1994: 23), “social change and spatial change are integral to each other” because space is the connecting of multiple trajectories that form the lived world. The spatial reality is



certainly dynamic, unpredictable, but it is also subject to contingent laws and forces, which are themselves unsteady and subject to change. It corresponds to the claim by Hegel (1977) that appearance is a superficial, almost inconsequential form of difference because it fails to reach the inner being of things, something that only self-consciousness and reason can secure. Not only differences are manifested in and through space, but the set of relations that produce space leads to a necessity of difference in the lived reality of the world. According to Hegel (2010: 222), necessity is “in itself the *one essence*, identical *with itself* but full of content.” The necessary happens through “an *other*” that is the medium of the activity, something that is both contingent and also a condition. What is necessary comes back to itself mediated by the other, it is an unqualified, unconditional return affected by the circle of circumstances (effectually, the concrete socio-spatial setting). Necessity is something merely posited through the other, but with unhindered outcomes; for Hegel (2010: 230), “the *truth of necessity* is thus *freedom*.” For instance, a capitalist society is shaped by the necessity of class-based relations, which underpins the production and extraction of value from the majority of the population. However, there are other forms of vital difference beyond the economic realm, but which also have a central constitutive role, as in the case of the alienated condition of the same subordinate majority and the utilization of gender, sexual and ethnic features to segregate people and undermine their political action.

All those differences influence and condition socio-spatial relations, not in any predeterminate way, but according to developments mediated by the relation with the (economic or otherwise) other. In other words, class-based differences mediate, and are mediated, by other differences beyond the economic domain, and vice versa. There is no antagonism between class and more-than-class differences, but these are all markers of identification instrumentalized by spatialized capitalist relations and reclaimed back by individuals and social groups who were negatively impacted. As argued by Thompson (1966: 9), “‘working classes’ is a descriptive term, which evades as much as it defines. It ties together a bundle of discrete phenomena... unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness... something which in fact happens in human relationships.” In general, people can experience, and claim, many forms of non-economic differentiation, such as gender, religion, age, level of education, sexual orientation, and place of origin, but class and ethnicity are certainly two main nexuses of difference involved and affected by the production of space. Those two main pillars of socio-spatial difference co-determine each other and eventually result in hybrid, *ethnaclass differences* held by all humans and according to their specific and general circumstances. All people, even if unaware of that, belong to a social class and have an ethnic ancestry, which jointly affect their life and actions. Rather than a separation between those two equally important categories, in reality everybody belonging to a class also has an ethnic identification, although sometimes some markers of differentiation may be left implicit.

The synergies between class and ethnicity need to be treated as dynamic, constantly unfolding networks of interaction. As noted by Pulido (2002: 762), questions around race and class are “hardly new – but *how* to build explicit anti-racist organizations rooted in either class or anti-capitalist [class-based] politics is quite challenging.” The apparent division between ethnicity and class cannot be resolved, and actually does not make sense, if removed from the social production of space. Class is necessarily realized in a spatial setting (both the working environment, the residential areas of labourers, managers and businesspersons, and the chains of input supply and trade), as much as personal and collective differentiation are expressed in space (in areas to live and celebrate difference, to mobilise and protest, and to shield from unwelcome homogenization). In that regard, the systematic attacks on their right to be different and the exercise of indifference have corroded the possibility for indigenous peoples to have equal or equivalent economic and social opportunities (let alone compensation for past violence). In a world shaped by neo-colonialism and severe exploitation of society and of the rest of nature, to be and remain indigenous depends on a fight to remain different in order to be treated fairly and compensate for violence accumulated over many generations. The thousands of contemporary indigenous groups are mainly descendants of peoples who suffered unimaginable forms of aggression, disruption, and displacement, generally associated with land grabbing, resource extraction and labor exploitation. Moreover, it is especially noteworthy that the very definition of indigenous peoples, forged in the global indigenous rights movement that emerged since the 1970s, emphasizes its political core. To be

indigenous is not a genetic or racial condition, but a relational operation that is both different and replicates other economic and socio-spatial asymmetries, as in the emblematic case of the Guarani-Kaiowa in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul (Ioris, 2022).

### **Attacking Guarani-Kaiowa ethnoclass differences**

This section will consider the socio-spatial trajectory of the Guarani-Kaiowa and the pressure exerted by development forces to confine them further and further to the margins of a regional development dependent on agribusiness exports. The tragedy of the Guarani-Kaiowa in Brazil, the second largest indigenous population in the country, is the result of anti-difference policies that have transformed them into victims of the necropolitical tendencies of agribusiness production. They are not only victims of an ongoing genocide, but their lives themselves are dictated by the genocidal imperative of agribusiness. As demonstrated in a growing number of media articles, academic publications, artistic expressions, politico-electoral interventions and research projects, around half of the indigenous people murdered in Brazil in recent decades were Guarani-Kaiowa. They have been confined to the edges of vast agribusiness farms (mainly producers of soybean and sugarcane) established in indigenous lands that were illegally and violently grabbed during territorial conquest and, particularly, the advance of conservative modernization into the Center-West region of Brazil in the second half of the twentieth century (Ioris, 2017). Most Guarani-Kaiowa now live in miserable material conditions, despite the high agricultural value of their land, and have been victims of genocidal violence because of and in space (on the ongoing genocide, called Kaiowicide, refer to Ioris 2021). The annual reports on violence against the communities published by CIMI, an organization maintained by the critical branches of the Catholic Church and certainly the main ally of the Guarani-Kaiowa in their fights in the courts and for daily survival, provide some grim statistics on the growing numbers of conflicts and murders. The majority of the aggressions are committed by private militias and police forces acting illegally in the name of landowners and agribusiness farmers (tacitly supported by politicians, mainstream journalists and magistrates).

The attacks on Guarani-Kaiowa difference are based on this central paradox of valuing indigenous land and workforce according to mainstream politico-economic priorities, but despising what was socially and ecologically unique. Following Hegel (1977: 3), we can understand that “To judge a thing that has substance and solid worth is quite easy, to comprehend it is much harder, and to blend judgement and comprehension in a definitive description is the hardest thing of all.” Hegel’s comment is even more pertinent considering that there is no single Guarani-Kaiowa trajectory, but each community and extended family, living in separate locations and facing specific enemies, will have their own history. At the same time, the convergence of the myriad of experiences constitutes the overall situation of the Guarani-Kaiowa and their acute confrontation with large-scale landowners and the leaders of agribusiness-based regional development. The clashes seem inevitable, at least from the authoritarian perspective of agribusiness, given that the southern part of Mato Grosso do Sul was all indigenous land and mainly occupied, for several centuries, by the ancestors of today’s Guarani-Kaiowa (Ioris, 2020). It was a vast territory with no fixed borders and a total area between four and eight million hectares, where the Guarani-Kaiowa and other, relatively smaller indigenous nations, used to live. Racism and spatial segregation have operated as perverse catalysts of an exploitative economic order that transformed the indigenous population into refugees in their own land. White supremacy, as in the case of settler colonialism and agribusiness-centred regional development of Mato Grosso do Sul, is essentially based on a narrative of the supposed inferiority and irreversible decadence of the Guarani-Kaiowa.

The intensification of the anti-indigenous measures and the systematic attempt to obliterate the Guarani-Kaiowa presence in their own territory denotes an aggressive *plasticization* of Mato Grosso do Sul. Renewed forms of cruelty and disregard are directly compared with the misfortune of the Palestinian people under the Zionist neo-colonial invasion described by Sayigh (2007). Since the 1940s, the Palestinians have been affected by the plan to build a Zionist state, based on misplaced biblical literalism, what has disconcerting parallels with the encroachment of private property and agribusiness upon Mato

Grosso do Sul in the same historical period. Similar to the fate of the native inhabitants of Palestine, the Guarani-Kaiowa have suffered from the widespread ethnic-related violence, fragmentation of ancestral areas, invisibility of their socio-political agency and confinement in small, highly inadequate reservations or encampments. In both cases, the main tool used by the aggressors was the nullification of long-term attachments to the land that ultimately make the natives what they are (different-for-themselves). For several generations, as observed by Noam Chomsky in the foreword of the same book, the Palestinians lived rich and full lives, despite material destitution and apparent poverty in the eyes of Western travelers (Sayigh, 2007). The situation in Mato Grosso do Sul has major parallels with the asymmetries that organize Israeli society where in earning inequalities cannot be understood without taking into account class differences interwoven with Palestinian ethnicity and class condition (Khattab, 2005). For instance, the unity of extended families and clans (or communities) was the basis of Palestinian peasant society, just like for the Guarani-Kaiowa, with a strong sense of collective support, partaking and self-sufficiency at the local level.

Zionism presupposes racism against both Arabs and non-white Jews, similar to what happened in Mato Grosso do Sul with the arrival of settlers and the oppression of the native population because of their devaluated differences. In both cases, the newcomers arrived from Europe and sponsored strong ideologies of ethnic and religious superiority vis-à-vis the ancestral inhabitants of the land. The Zionist oppressors in Israel were mainly the European Jews under the ideology of the return to the promised land, and in Mato Grosso do Sul the main usurpers were descendants of European migrants who moved to South America in the course of urban and industrial expansion in their original countries, only to reproduce the violence their ancestors suffered during the migration against local non-white groups. The economic migrants who moved to Mato Grosso do Sul gradually reorganized themselves as a strong new landed elite with strategic alliances with the forerunner landowners who started to grab the indigenous territory in the nineteenth century. The more recent newcomers soon incorporated the anti-indigenous attitudes of the older elite and used it to justify sustained, vicious attacks on the ancestral inhabitants. In Mato Grosso do Sul, as in Palestine, the supposed backwardness of the indigenous populations was used by the settlers to rationalize land grabbing and justify their displacement. The victims of such criminal forms of nation building were not only treated as people without any basic rights, but their differentiated condition justified their treatment as outlaws and troublemakers. Contrasting with the indigenous and peasant economy that existed in the area, militarised Zionism and national colonization in Brazil imposed an abstract sense of development and equality at the expense of the violent marginalization, privatization of the commons (land, water, biodiversity, energy) and continuous brutality exercised against the original inhabitants.

Because of the aggressive, organized racism of the newcomers and their persistent, illegal appropriation of native land, it seems impossible to imagine a compromise with agribusiness, just as it is unlikely to envisage a stable accommodation between Zionists and Palestinians without major geopolitical changes. On the contrary, the *plasticization* of Mato Grosso do Sul became even more explicit after the election of the neo-fascist government of Bolsonaro in 2018, what was followed by a serious deterioration in the treatment of indigenous demands and respect of their rights. Adding insult to long-lived injury, the national state refused to accept the legitimate markers of difference held by numerous indigenous nations, therefore preventing them from having their areas lawfully returned and even from the most basic forms of health and food assistance (INA, 2022). Not a single indigenous piece of land was homologated by the ultra-right wing administration and the services provided to indigenous communities were seriously undermined, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic when the federal agency (Funai) avoided vaccinating indigenous people in urban areas or in indigenous lands still without full recognition. In practice, the situation in Brazil since 2018 has been nothing short of a Kafkaesque nightmare, especially because the neo-fascist government of Bolsonaro that systematically and explicitly tried to abandon the indigenous nations to their fate. Such reality can only be properly interpreted, in the words of Žižek (2013), as ‘less than nothing’, where a lot has to improve in order to achieve the level of nothingness.

The main economic sector that benefited from the even more deliberate anti-indigenous policies has evidently been agribusiness operated by the owners of large rural properties. The sector has been an embarrassing charade, as it repeatedly tried to conceal that it produces huge amounts of tradable commodities, but very little of 'real' food. It is basically a massive production of 'less than nothing'. It cultivates and harvests its own nothingness, only disguised as 'regional development', leaving behind permanent environmental and social impacts (Ioris, 2018). Agribusiness is less than nothing also because it is based on the perpetuation of indifference through the instrumentalization of socio-spatial difference. It reflects a well-orchestrated effort to conceal this deeply genocidal pillars of the agribusiness-based development that greatly define contemporary Brazilian macroeconomics. For instance, the mass campaign with the slogan 'The Agro is Pop' [*O Agro é Pop*] broadcasted since 2016 by Globo, the most influential national TV channel. It aims to forge consensus in the Brazilian society that the agribusiness sector is what ensures the national economy a regular, abundant flow of external resources. The attempt of the agribusiness sector to preserve the aphorism of regional development was already voiced by Saramago (1989: 14): "Be fruitful and multiply me, says the latifundia." The denial of the Guarani-Kaiowa as rights bearing people and the simultaneous ideological conversion of into unspecified peasants or urban-industrial workers is an implicit strategy to demoralize and demobilize the communities. The pathological drive towards indifference is clear indication of the *unhappy consciousness of agribusiness*, as the duplication of self-consciousness within itself, its projection into something else that does not allow it to perceive its own internal fragility. The "*Unhappy Consciousness* is the consciousness of self as a dual-natured, merely contradictory being" (Hegel, 1977: 126).

Nonetheless, there was more than dust, mud and blood on the roads and fields of agribusiness in Mato Grosso do Sul, because the indigenous population continues to resist and try to reclaim differences on their own terms. Their bottom-up mobilization, however, proves that the preservation of a distinctive ethnicity is an integral element of politico-economic struggles. That has become particularly evident in the last four decades, since the end of the military dictatorship (1964-1985), when the Guarani-Kaiowa decided to actively resist the perversity of regional development through the deployment of their ethnic identity and the value of their labour power. It is a collective resistance based on perceived and lived differences against the powerful pressure to nullify the ancestral inhabitants of the region. The grassroots reactions of the Guarani-Kaiowa have entailed a dialect of being more and more themselves to cope with unfair space transformations that have undermined what they are (and want to be). That is what Hegel (1977: 211) describes as the "double movement of self-consciousness" as the active interaction between individuals who, through their own activity, produce universal, emancipatory Reason. The force of resistance is articulated because of space and happens in local spaces cherished because of their unique material and symbolic differentiation. The Guarani-Kaiowa have lost almost everything after centuries of attacks, displacement, oppression, and exploitation, but have not abandoned their resolve to be a recognized as a self-referential nation. They have understood that it is impossible to evade regular interactions with non-indigenous (and indigenous) groups and public authorities, but they are fully aware that those other segments of society are unable to reach the core of their differences. Mariátegui (2011: 149) rightly affirmed, a century ago, that "the solution to the problem of the Indian [land grabbing and miserable working exploitation] must be a social solution. It must be worked out by the Indians themselves."

The most important and highly effective reaction by the Guarani-Kaiowa nation against the oppressive indifference of the agribusiness-based economy is the grassroots mobilization, which is networked support across families and communities, to reinstate difference and recreated ethnic spaces. There is a perennial campaign to occupy and return to their own lands, confronting the agribusiness opponents and putting pressure on the perverse bureaucracy. The initiative to recover what always belonged to them are called *retomadas* [retakings], which involves the reoccupation of the area lost to land grabbers by the displaced community. The *retomada* is fundamentally a process of *Aufhebung*, a socio-spatial resurrection out of the apparent absence crated by successive indigenous genocides. Against the self-destructiveness and ruin caused by agribusiness, the Guarani-Kaiowa maintain the determination to 'be there' that derives from the coercion 'not to be anywhere.' It has represented, since the 1970s the main hope for the thousands of destitute Guarani-Kaiowa families living in the overcrowded reservations and



in precarious road encampments, who summon family attachments, memories and knowledge of the *tekoha* [ethnic territories of extended families] against the generic forms of socio-ecological interaction introduced by commercial farmers (Brand, 2004). The *retomada* invariably involves strong religiosity and requires great courage (because it will be inevitably resisted by the farmers currently using the land, who will recruit armed militias and the police force to expel the indigenous contingent). The indigenous movement find existential reference and encouragement in the trajectory of ancestors and elders, who are the main holders of knowledge and memories. As pointed out by Gibson-Graham (2020) the geographical past is both a prelude and a potential for radical transformation, but it depends on ‘reading for difference’, that is, attending to the great variety of non-capitalist or ‘more-than-capitalist’ economic activities, including sharing and reciprocity practiced by indigenous peoples.

Despite all the difficulties and the organized indifference of the Brazilian State, the *retomadas* are the more vivid proof of the importance of indigenous difference and its profound political implications. In Hegelian terms, it is a socio-spatial movement in which to be Guarani-Kaiowa is the ultimate reason for being Guarani-Kaiowa. It the reaffirmation of what they have always been and where to indefinitely remain. If peasants are entitled to a piece of land, the natives have ancestral rights to *the* piece of land of their ancestors. They have never really abandoned their lands lost to agribusiness and, through time, understood the knowledge of the other (i.e. agribusiness) as the other of their knowledge, culminating in self-knowledge now put in place to articulate the *retomada* of the land that has always belonged to them. As commonly mentioned by the Guarani-Kaiowa, “we are the land, and the land is us.” The rationality of the *retomadas* is much deeper than the logic of agrarian reform (which is nonetheless strongly rejected by the agribusiness sector and by most politicians), but it is guided by the lived metaphysics of ‘space certainty’, that is, the solid conviction that, because they are on the right side of decency and have godly support, their way of life will prevail. Socio-spatial differences cultivated over countless generations are being mobilized as a powerful tool and a prefiguration of a future that would bring them back to the beginning of everything. In ways that are difficult for the non-indigenous mind to process, the Guarani-Kaiowa have more than hope, but the strong certainty that, one day, things will change and they will be able to return to the land of their forefathers. Considering the widespread material poverty of the Guarani-Kaiowa and the enormous power of the agribusiness enemies, ‘space certainty’ may seem foolish, but the geographical experience demonstrates surprising willingness to resist and confront the most difficult institutional and political obstacles trying to reclaim difference on their own terms. If Hegel is right to say that only the whole is the truth, this whole has multiple constitutive forces and places, every single particular is also holder and producer of a constantly reshaped universality.

### **Conclusion: Struggle for Difference**

The Guarani-Kaiowa have become increasingly and unwillingly involved in agrarian capitalist relations that, first, expelled them from their ancestral areas and then confined to the fringes of the regional society, forced to live in rural or urban peripheries, seen as degenerate relics of themselves. The hegemony of contemporary agribusiness permeates not only crop and animal production, but strongly reconfigured consumption patterns, social values, the rule of law and, ultimately, the production of space according to the sanctimony of large private properties (regardless of their illegal genesis and exclusionary effects). However, to be indigenous is to exist politically in space and in relation to antagonist forces and processes that constantly reinstate their ethnoclass condition. The Guarani-Kaiowa have to negotiate, on a daily basis, their subsumption under prevalent socio-economic relations and their concurrent attempt to escape from the same experience. The Guarani-Kaiowa population is inside the agribusiness-based economy because it has demanded their land and labour, and it is outside because of the antagonistic (anti-difference) attitudes of farmers and authorities. This hybrid indigenous is supposed to be increasingly less indigenous and more and more inserted in the generic working class (whose mixed ethnic configuration is despised by the members of the regional landed class, who themselves claim to be whiter and righteous than they really are). Through resistance and the ability to handle ethnogenesis

on their own terms, the Guarani-Kaiowa have been able to mediate difference among themselves and in relation to the non-indigenous, despite all the misery and death inflicted by agrarian capitalism.

The universal of any society, as the truth, contains an internal plurality of parts that are beings-for-self that, following the expression of internal qualities through the movement of the force, become beings-for-another. Each part is in itself a unity that, because of the evolution of understanding, is expressed and reconciled in the whole. Difference is actualized in the movement of force and the connection with the other (for Hegel, 1977: 82, “difference is nothing else than being-*for-another*”), which is exactly what agrarian capitalism corrupts once it tries to impose a static and indifferent space. The multiple associations and potential ethnoclass synergies between indigenous and non-indigenous workers are a perennial menace to the tenuous politico-spatial order. Making use of an anti-essentialist class analysis, as proposed by Gibson-Graham (2020), it can be identified an ethnoclass boundary that separates subordinate social groups from the hegemonic agro-industrial class and those in control of regional development. The Guarani-Kaiowa road to freedom passes through higher self-consciousness and interaction with multiple (indigenous and non-indigenous) others. The conversion of socio-spatial difference into a nexus of consciousness and trigger of political agency does not only follow the accumulation of knowledge and ethnoclass experiences. Against all the appearances, geographical agency of the Guarani-Kaiowa is more active and creative than that of agribusiness farmers, given that the latter basically replicate techno-economic protocols conceived elsewhere. There is nothing given a priori in terms of the intensity and the actual features of those antagonisms, but it depends on the actual engagement and the balance of power between farmers, non-indigenous workers and indigenous communities.

On the one hand, the dialectics of universals and particulars in the tense context of agribusiness intensification is connected with wider politico-economic pressures for the equalization of the conditions of exploitation required to organize inequalities of a capitalist society. On the other, there is a diversity of attitudes among agribusiness farmers and one must avoid a reductivist interpretation that depicts the whole sector as an ‘undifferentiated evil’, which ends up creating a strawman to be blindly attacked without noticing the subtlety of concrete measures. This is even more relevant considering that the main instrument deployed by farmers and authorities is not direct confrontation, but lasting indifference, which cannot be counteracted with more indifference from grassroots organizations. The more the differences are preyed upon, there is a mirage of growing sameness, despite abject injustices and inequalities. Hegel (2010: 179) argues that “negation is at the same time relation, *difference, positedness, being-mediated.*” Difference is thus far from static or given in advance, but has to be reconciled with what seems to be the same (identity). The ontological sequence is being in itself, then the sphere of difference, and finally the return from difference to a relation with the self through the other (ultimately, each is “the other’s *own* other” (p. 183). This movement entails the passage into another and the re-entering into the self as the same that is different. More than anything else, the trajectory of indigenous peoples demonstrates the deep cluster of forces within difference; they epitomize the maximum individuality because of their ethnicity and existential attachments to particular places, and at the same time embody the most universal, long-term elements of survival and survivability amidst capitalist disruption. The unique struggle of each indigenous society is the embodied proof of the limits and mounting insufficiencies of totalizing socio-economic institutions. Indigenous peoples are holders of acute differences who need to remain different in order to be part of, and unsettle, the universal that insists on discriminating them. In the words of Hegel (1977: 182), Spirit (as the development of reason, the unity of being and thought) “behaves negatively towards itself as an individuality” but also acts “negatively towards itself as a universal being.”

There is always the negation of the negation as the new affirmation. The endeavour to reduce the Guarani-Kaiowa to an indeterminate proletarian condition has, among other consequences, the revitalization of their sense of indigeneity (what is also a reinvigorated mode of expressing a desire for social change, according to Canessa, 2007). Despite the ideologized normalization of difference by transgenic agribusiness, imposed socio-economic relations never managed to completely erase the strong self-identification markers accumulated and reworked over many centuries. In Hegelese, the

Guarani-Kaiowa are different from other segments of the working class, but the more they see, and are seen, as different, the more immersed in the subalternity of the rest of the dispossessed population. By the same token, the identification of indigenous populations as both members of the vast working class and of unique ethnical groups has major political consequences (another part of the negation of the negation) in terms of poor-poor alliances that, if properly carried out, can fiercely challenge politico-economic trends and the property claims of agribusiness farmers. The indigenous question is, first of all, an ethnoclass issue and the way out depends on recognizing what is unique and what is common in indigenous lives and demands. The link between internal and external differences among those excluded by agribusiness gradually comes back to haunt its supposed economic achievements. As put by Hegel (1977: 388), “Conscience is the common element of the two self-consciousnesses, and this element is the substance in which the deed has an *enduring reality*, the moment of being *recognized* and *acknowledged* by others.” The claim of difference and the rejection of indifference make the Guarani-Kaiowa the most oppressed ethnoclass minority in the region, but also the most serious challenge to the hegemony of agribusiness because they insist on living in or near lands that were brutally grabbed in recent decades. The Guarani-Kaiowa and other indigenous peoples are not only different, but want to make a difference (that is, want their specific ethnoclass markers to make a difference).

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