As the Seminar progressed through the various sections, it became increasingly clear that the central character of our times was implicit in the transformation of life of the human societies, and that such transformations involved all sectors of human life and activity. Everyone shared the feeling that this process of transformation needed to be related to our life in ways that led us to a more humane and egalitarian world.

From this very awareness, different types of projects came up for intellectual consideration, such as the social project, dealing with the question of social classes and the assumption of power, and the national project, dealing with national self-determination and the release of the untapped potentials of the people. There was still another project, the civilisational one, which related to an overview of the transformation of the world, and also to some of the main problems that came in the way of its processes.

The last section of the Seminar was, therefore, geared to the investigation of the civilisational position of the problem of human and social development. In the search for a civilisational project, or the civilisational strategies, if one prefers that, the contrapositions of the new spirit and the hitherto prevailing one were taken into consideration. The papers presented in the section testified to that fact.

V. C. Diarrassouba, in his paper Commentaires sur la dynamique des civilisations, raised the question of the dialectics of relations between the intellectual superstructure and the technological and transformational infrastructure within the concept of civilisation. Humankind, he said, was divided into civilisations, each of which had its own specificity and played a different role according to the geocultural space it occupied. Man lived in societies and, consequently, all peoples had one civilisation; but the plurality of civilisations that succeeded one another, through the course of history, constituted the proper object of the science of history. It was a lesson of history that a civilisation could disappear. As Montherlant wrote: ‘Civilisations are, by nature, ephemeral.’ Or, as Valery said: ‘A civilisation has the same fragility as a life.’
The destiny of a civilisation was, thus, always uncertain and, for each civilisation, it was the will that enabled it to face the challenge of circumstances and determined the measure of its expectation of life. In the words of Alain: 'Every morning we have to build the world — such is the awakening, such is consciousness.'

The concept of civilisation was both a beginning and a potentiality, a hope and a requirement. Through fidelity to one's own cultural specificity, all peoples made their full contribution to the symphony of civilisation. In reality, civilisation was an enterprise that included its risks and innovations and could only be experienced through anxiety and insecurity. A civilisation was not a reality, but an activity; it was not a 'being', but a 'doing'. In the life of a civilisation, 'imagination' was at work under the double aspect of 'know' and 'know-how'.

There was, however, a dichotomy of 'formation' of man and 'transformation' of things in civilisation. As August Comte pointed out: 'Civilisation . . . consists in the development of the human mind, on the one hand, and, in the development of action of man over nature, on the other.' Technological environment, as everyone knew, could orient intellectual formations. The creation of the first machines, at the end of the Middle Ages, had preceded and determined the development of a 'scientificism' of a mechanistic inspiration. And the Cartesian theory of the 'animal-machine' could appear only in an economic context, where, for the first time, the machine was replacing the man.

Diarrassouba quoted Sartre, who demonstrated in his *Critique de la raison dialectique* that the transformation of the world, necessary to the satisfaction of human needs, made its movement towards Nature the first cultural attitude. Culture was, then, first of all, a transformation, he argued. Tools and labour coincided in this praxis, which was the exteriorisation of function. As Sartre said: 'The material object becomes a strange and living being, with its uses and its own movement.' Consequently, one could understand that representations could only be superstructures: in the words of Marx, 'the world of ideas being only the material world transposed and expressed in human mind'. In his remarkable work, *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques*, Simondon pointed out the necessary link that united the transformation of the world and the formation of man. A. Emmanuel would view this as the transformation of the world through practice and through technical instrumentation which modified mental structures and conditions — the emergence of thought and culture. One could go as far as to say that 'one has the culture of one's technology, and it is absolutely illusory to search for the technology of one's culture'.

From that, one could say that the independence of a people was a growing function of their development and economic potentials. We were, Diarrassouba observed, much more dependent today when we tilled the land with imported tractors than when we did the same with ploughs made, from beginning to end, on the spot.