

ROMANIA
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
“NICOLAE BĂLCESCU”
LAND FORCES ACADEMY



THE KNOWLEDGE BASED ORGANIZATION

THE 13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**PSYCHOLOGY. SOCIOLOGY. PHYLOSOPHY
*CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS 8***

22nd-25th NOVEMBER 2007

 **LAND FORCES ACADEMY PUBLISHING HOUSE**

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SIBIU**

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VIEWS ON CULTURAL CROSSINGS IN MODERN AND POSTMODERN TIMES

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Abstract

From time to time, the most recent archeological discoveries show us that the perception of historians on establishing the moment when different cultures and civilizations meet each other is not really accurate. Proofs of contacts between the great civilizations of Iron Ages, middle Ages and following, are more often revealed despite of the lack of these proofs in the written history. Then, is easy for us to realize the dimension of these contacts in the modern and post modern times, as consequence of the boom in development of communications means.

The greatest world cultural centers, Eurasia – Mediterranean, India and China grown-up, developed individually and they established the first contacts, mix and reject each other, in the end each one finding on the other its own concerns and common characteristics.

For Hegel, China, India and the Occident are the dialectical steps in the development of the intellect. [1] For Jaspers there is no chronological or logical hierarchy between the three worlds, in a common development. On the contrary, it is about juxtaposition of large dimensions cultural groups, which had no contacts in the first part of their progress. Of course there were some contact and

exchanges. Thus, the writing circulated among groups and cultures. The three civilizations remained autonomous concerning their origin with absolutely no influences.

The real exchanges were made when the Buddhism infiltrate China, when Alexander conquered part of India, and continuing with the relations made in Hellenic and Roman times. [2]

There are some fundamental moments in history from where the humanity seemed to walk on new directions:

- Prehistoric age when the hominid ancestors became humans;
- Antic civilizations;
- The axial period;
- The age of technique and science (modern time);
- The postmodern time. [3]

We are not analyzing in this paper the first two levels, thus these are the ground on which the humanity grown the base of it. *Panta rei* is proved once again.

Each civilization produced its own conceptual art related to its religion and which represented the Truth. The art became in this way the mediator between the man and goods.

In all past civilizations the art was close linked to religion. The Occidental civilization invented the comparative approach, gathering in the same place the esthetic, the historic and the scientific from all human achievement.

The Occidental civilization also invented the transcultural modernity. Is not building any more cathedrals or creating sacred art since it lost some part of the belief in gods, but builds museums and sees in art a new form of absolute, the same as envisage the eternity of the art creations to be a possible succedaneum of the death of the gods.

After passing from cathedrals to large museums, the XX century esthetic revolution envisage the transformation of stone and iron museums into Imaginary Museum. [4] A religious civilization could not have museums or conceive the utopia of Imaginary Museum. Malraux said that XX century marks the entering into the scene of the globe art, the art of all civilizations. Each one pretend to have, to reveal the truth. Each one is an esthetical arrangement of the chaos. Malraux also said that: “Each civilization express the

harmony between the people and the universe. Each civilization supports this harmony on a supreme truth that is borne and will disappear with the civilization". The civilizations are "successive worlds of truth", "the artist created imagines of truth like gods created the world".

The Imaginary Museum is the product, the symbol and maybe the symptom of the new relation between the occidental civilization and the truth and history. Strongly linked to religion, the traditional art of great civilizations was the revealing of truth: "For millenniums, the main purpose of artistic creation (...) was the revealing or maintaining the different types of truth".

Changing the cultural statute of time, trying to see it as history, the modernity changed even the meaning of the "truth". The occident discovered the world of art in the same time he discovered the history.

This historicism is the cause – or the effect – of the birth of universal history, of the universal museum of the work of art and cultural products (sacred texts, classics, literary operas etc). "Maybe the first planetary civilization will conceive the first history of humankind".

But the history of humankind the will be created tomorrow will not be Voltaire or Hegel based. A real history of humankind presumes a sort of evolutionism and universalism when a history of arts or civilizations requires a sort of relativism. "The history of civilizations" is a "discontinue history".

Malraux's Imaginary Museum and the "the philosophy of art" that is its ground put into question classical concepts of inheritance, tradition, filiations, universality. In what quantity the Summer, the Egypt are our ancestors? Why the Greeks are part of our history and the Chinese are not, not even the Hindu? In the analyze of the man we are making, the faraway one meets the old one: the societies we use to call savage we call them primitive. "We consider our self the offspring of Greece not Summer, China or Mexico, of which art symbols are frequently as Athena's statues".

The history is simultaneous made of distance and proximity; it is in the same time inheritance and separation, filiations and inexistence. To create, along with the Imaginary Museum, a

universal ethnography and history means to create a veritable anthropology analyze, to discover the man in its civilization, beyond the linear and irreversible history of Illuminated evolutionists and philosophers.

Nevertheless the history changes the date, function of the interpretations given to some new or old archeological discoveries that can change entirely the well known concepts we are use to.

We would like to give an example we find expressive for the way we see the world from a single angle. Walking the path of the well known “silk road” there was discovered in south east of China 2.000 to 4.000 years old settlements and graves in which were find European people. The surprise was bigger when the investigations were certified by genome samples. Even we do not know who are this ancient travelers the existence of some mummies very well preserved, made in other technique than the Egyptian one, dressed in European clothes puts many question marks on many other “certain things”. We can say the same for Latin America and North America, continents that were visited hundred or maybe thousands of years ago by Europeans or Africans.

The mosaic of history can be combined and recombined, function of time and place, but things are not entirely revealed.

These are the reasons for we have to analyze with caution any opinion, old or new, on inter-civilization conflict.

Borges always imagined the Paradise as a library. [5] That way we like the idea to think of a library when we refer to esthetic products of humankind. The concept of world literature occurred in the Century of Ligts, on Voltaire, Montesquieu, Madame de Stael, then Goethe, but was completed at the end of XX century, in the Mighty Internet era..

The grate texts can easily go beyond the language, political, civil and cultural barriers, the only condition being that they must be translated in the languages of interested communities.

Once with the development of globalization, sustained by mass media and modern transportation, the freely circulation of religious, political, literary and scientifically ideas get a rapid acceleration making some “historical mutations”. We enter now in the age of

generalized mix of cultures, civilizations, nations and their ideas and concerns.

The library of XXI century man is one that reflects more than one civilization, a Babel library in which all the religions, languages and arts are mixed.

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