

THE ARTS AND GLOBALIZATION

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Summary

The globalization phenomenon acts in the world like a storm that sweeps all in its way. This phenomenon tries to put together many different cultures. But every culture develops a resistance against a level of globalization. Nevertheless, each culture must be open to reevaluations and should be in search of new equilibrium. Following the Senegalese philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne, the paper develops the idea that, evaluation comes before values and it is the *raison d'être* of these values. This implies that it is necessary for a culture to be its own historian. So, it is necessary to invent a different discourse in the face of the globalization phenomenon.

In effect, the author thinks that the notion of world literature is appropriated to bring out a discussion on the Arts and the Globalization. Literature is a medium for presenting human forms of conscience and social phenomena. It also helps in evaluating human costs resulting from social rise in efficiency following the current globalization thrust and also in identifying its victims. Literature traces the possibility of the diversity of ways towards the better living conditions of communities that are able to conceive an “incubation” program for modern science and its props. That is why literature, although it formulates questions, provides likely answers to a galloping globalization phenomenon that is detrimental to cultural specificities.

1. Introduction

This paper intends to explore the theoretical frameworks and bases upon which it is possible to ground any fruitful discussion of the phenomenon of globalization and local culture as these concepts relate to the arts.

As a brief introduction I will begin by pointing out two basic truths :

The globalization phenomenon blows across the world like a storm that sweeps along anything that stands in its way. No culture has ever been defined on a basis other than that of an integration of differences. Such integration brings forth new values, which remain constantly alive.

2. Reevaluation of values and reinvention of identity

The Senegalese philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne points out that evaluation comes before values and is as much the *raison d'être* of these values as it helps explain their historical function. This implies that it is necessary for a culture to be its own historian, to understand the evaluations in which it has been able to find its equilibrium and also that there are still possibilities for reevaluation wherever it finds itself. Consequently, the global conception of values must be replaced by a new dynamic evaluation of the entire sociopolitical and sociocultural system. In short, with a view to achieving a new reflection against the standardization of globalization, the acknowledgment of various ways towards the integrated development of cultural entities is of necessity.

Diagne refers to that way of thinking that values are entities that can be circumscribed within a set likely to be kept under control as a "global conception of values". Seeing things in this light can only lead us to false criticism that consists in making us think that in the face of globalization there is a kind of sorting operation to be conducted so as to choose values to be kept from those to be discarded. Thus, identity should not be seen in a hazy set of values enshrined in cultures ; rather, it should be both the horizon and the materialization of new assessments that values can yield (identity production) and which will aim at the mastery of their future (identity reinvention). Such mastery of the future will therefore not be any kind of value polishing whatsoever, but rather a reasoned reevaluation with which communities can identify themselves.

Such an argument is proof of the urgency of an inevitable new relationship with the environment and between the conscience and the present in the face of a globalization process which, by its breath-taking pace and the nature and scope of the resulting new challenges mankind is grappling with, seems to have taken many local areas unawares. This explains why Africa for instance is confronted with the unpleasant necessity to live through many eras in one and to evolve at an unavoidably unequal pace of different temporalities, each posing specific historical problems that call for specific solutions.

It is therefore the realization of the failure of a kind of "development" philosophy, that is, the concept of a linear, continuous and uniform progress that henceforth appears as a debasing notion that leads to an impracticable way that ought to underlie a reflection on a well thought out and conscious society to be.

Consequently, the transfer mechanism should henceforth be replaced by that of invention. Alternately, reflection organs could be set up with a view to facilitating the appropriation of the available cultural heritage, a real mastery of accumulated knowledge and an optimal utilization of scientific wealth. In this respect, one must

question the place of traditional knowledge and know-how within the context of modern science in order to invent a “*different*” discourse. For it is a terrible fate to view one’s own world, one’s own life and values through someone else’s eyes.

The invention of a “different” discourse implies a review of the conditions of determination of scientific issues, the conditions of the relevance of these issues in relation to the daily problems of a society. We certainly live in a world where no one can afford self-exclusion without risking suffocation. But a reevaluation of the phenomenon of ethnicity enables the elaboration of terms of reference, conceptual designs capable of apprehending the particular value as it is. (see *Sorting out culture*)

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