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I International Symposium on Culture of Remembrance

Bosnia and Herzegovina



INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO



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“Culture of Remembrance: Twilight or New Awakening”



International University of Sarajevo
12—13 April, 2014 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

CULTURE OF REMEMBRANCE

Book of proceedings

I INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

*“Bosnia and Herzegovina – Culture of remembrance:
Twilight or new Awakening“*

Editors

Sabahudin Hadžialić

Alma Jeftić

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**I INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
CULTURE OF REMEMBRANCE**

*“Bosnia and Herzegovina – Culture of remembrance:
Twilight or new Awakening“*

**I MEĐUNARODNI SIMPOZIJ
KULTURA SJEĆANJA**

*„Bosna i Hercegovina – Kultura sjećanja:
Sumrak ili Novo buđenje“*

**И МЕЂУНАРОДНИ СИМПОЗИЈ
КУЛТУРА СЈЕЋАЊА**

*„Босна и Херцеговина – Култура сјећања:
Сумрак или Ново буђење“*

Abstracts live video here:

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**Knowing through culture
– an important step to accept one to each over and to deal better difficult
moments**

Marius Chelaru
Editor in chief of the magazines - “Poezia” („Poetry”) and „Kadō”,
second editor in chief “Carmina Balcanica”
From: Iași, Romania

marius.1961@yahoo.com

Abstract

We are living times in which the conflicts (from declared or not politic, economic, religious “reasons”) take dramatic shapes.

The improper extrapolation of value/ politic systems or in a improper manner for some “conflict territories” lead to painful failures. The scourge of terrorism (a term used sometimes in a improper manner/ way) complicated more and more everything. There was attacks against some countries based on “reasons” considered to be at least questionable.

There are consequences beyond all these, deep in the collective peoples memories. It is really necessary to understand what is the culture of remembrance and reconciliation, even it is not easy and it is often difficult to speak about state politics in this direction.

In the region of South East Europe, with so many ethnic groups/ peoples, where were so many conflicts and boundaries between countries were changed over and over (often influenced by foreign powers), there are alive many of resentments, and people which can be convinced that there are „conspiracies” coming from the past and what we named “culture of remembrance” is seriously touched of all these.

A old sūtra from „Mikyō”, a treatise adopted by an oriental martial school, almost covered by the oblivion, remember us that hate is born from fear, fear from ignorance, and ignorance is a corollary of the missing of knowledge.

I believe that, even seems to be so common, it is important to know better and profoundly one to each over, an knowing through culture is a huge step, because involve to understand not only some books or movies, but mentalities, traditions, behavior etc.

Instrument are near us, we must only to have the willing to try to do it. Knowledge, in this way, really means power. The power to understand one to each over and to have peace.

Key words: collective memories, ethnic groups, culture, culture of remembrance, knowledge through culture,

Knowing through culture
– an important step to accept one to each other and to deal better difficult moments

I presume that all of us know that manner in which, often, the “international community” (and I mean mostly the politicians speech) objectifies (or I should say „create” somehow a strange distance) using terms like “distant conflicts”. It is a paradox for “ordinary” people that today, even we try to built laws, International Organizations (which, we must to admit, didn’t had enough rapid and efficient answers, euphemistically speaking, till now faced with some issues) still the systematic murder of „others”, even „ethnic cleansing” and attempts (which globally speaking, there are “seen” mostly “after”) at cultural erasure.

We are watching on TV news about conflicts we really don’t exactly understand, but we receive “explanations” and “reasons why” to be “sure” that in former Yugoslavia, not so many years before, near our days or even today in Chechnya (or other places populated by peoples from Caucasus and nearby) or, recently, Crimea (where we hear about Tatars position¹³²) or Iraq or Afghanistan or... unfortunately in so many places, “things” are... somehow “under control”.

But, in fact, we know so few about who are those people who are fighting there, for what, why they become enemies of a superpower or of the World itself.

When, in the time of Boris Yeltsin, named by some people “the tsar of Russian democracy”, started the war in Chechnya, I read that a western expert said that if we need to understand what’s there we must to read Hadji Murad, written by Lev Tolstoy. I agree. But I presume my reasons are very different. I want to understand the mentality, the cultural fundaments of the world of the new “Hajimurad al-Khunzaki” (thea real name of the man who inspired Hadji Murad character), that confederate of the Imam Shamil, who led the resistance to Russia’s annexation of the Caucasus¹³³, and betrayed his ally, than went over to the Russians in years 1850. From the same reason I am grateful that I could travel in former Yugoslavia, after the war, or in Armenia, Nagorno Karabach and other places and I could understand many things better, I hope.

When I arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, I crossed Drina having in mine deeply thoughts the load of the „bridge metaphor”, from the cultural discourses on Ivo Andrić’s

¹³² They had a blood history with URSS, millions being killed in an almost “unknown” genocide of the Caucasus peoples. And, beyond this, from cultural and national identity point of view, they suffered some important changing – fist they wrote using Arabic letters, communists changed it with Cyrillic one, now they discuss about to change with the Latin letters. Each and every change led to loosing of the contact of the newest generations with all the creations written in the old alphabet.

¹³³ The „War of Caucasus” - 1817-1864.

The Bridge on the Drina or Mostar, Stari Most/ Old Bridge. I stepped with a lot of thoughts, after some days there, on Sarajevo's *Latinski most* (Latin Bridge).

I was located in a hotel named "Hayat", very near from a place famous from a famous movie about Sarajevo, *Valter brani Sarajevo/ Walter Defends Sarajevo*. And then my minds went to the scenes I watched on TV about 1990's terrified war of the people which were, till then, citizens of the same country, and I remembered Stevan Bulajić's *Bitka na Neretvi/ The Battle on the Neretva*, Hajrudin Krvavac's *Most/ The Bridge*... and what I knew from the past, from Romania, about Yugoslavia. Under Tito's leadership, the partisans troupes, the People's Liberation Army (*Narodno-oslobodilačka vojska*) and the Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia (*Partizanski odredi Jugoslavije*) had a kind of center in Jajce, Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1943.

Bridges are complicated... "metaphors" faced with reality... and not only here...

Because I truly believe that knowing better one to each other we can not stop wars, maybe (because politics is a strange world where often logic is not a measure of the things, but money and interests), but we are able to understand better "the others". We can build in our mind a tool to eliminate or to understand why are used some cliché about peoples in a moment or other, for an interest or other, and it will be not so easy to be manipulate.

I believe that the communication through a "cultural/ literary magazine" means, through the choices you take, the way you write (vocabulary, speech, themes etc.) also the exposing of a way of thinking. I am interested of the way in which communicate individuals and peoples through cultures, how much they really want to know one to each other, beyond commercial or national purposes. I am interested to the way in which a nation, a people, a country is reflected in the culture of the other countries/ peoples.

I started from the presumption that when you write not only the art/ the literature are "determinant", but the way in which reader, as a "result" of a type of civilization/ mentality/ education "answers" to economic, social, politic and educational factors. So, from the art opera till the way you transmit a message there are "steps" which need to be understand.

Culture is as an alive organism. The world is changing from many point of views, and concepts as "globalization" involved many valences which must to be understand in as much as possible real parameters, with particular elements, from a place to another.

In order to this, I started (or I accepted to join other colleagues) to work on some particular directions, to built my program starting, on short, from some aspects:

1. even we discuss about “globalization”, with its multiple faces, about tolls for communication/ information much over we had 20 years ago, in reality we know one to each over, including the cultural point but others of view, rather slightly one to each other.
2. “globalization is a phenomenon which must be watched with high responsibility, maybe mostly regarding the identity/ diversity in the cultural domain, and because, beyond the theoretic concepts used, there are languages which are dying, cultures which are vanished.
3. I propose to myself to study these aspects on some socio-cultural “directions”, reported to some interest areas:
 - a. Romania and South-Eastern European Cultures
 - b. Romania in European context, and extended, in a Western/ global one
 - c. Romania and Oriental cultures
 - d. Romania and other area geographic areas cultures
 - e. Ethnic groups from Romania
 - f. Romanians from abroad

I built my “program” with a lecture plan, a travel plan, but also starting from collaborating with some important magazines from Romania and abroad, but mostly in four magazines which, in my intentions, are in way “used” by me “to go” in all over the world:

- a. „Poezia”/ “Poetry”, magazine of poetic culture (published in Iași, Romania)
- b. *Carmina Balcanica*. Review of South-East European Spirituality, Craiova, Bucharest, Romania
- c. „Doina”, **Revue de Littérature, Civilisation et Culture Universelle, bilingue, franco-roumaine, Paris, France (unfortunately now the project ends)**
- d. „Kadō”, Calea Poeziei, Review of Euro-Asiatic Poetry, Poetic Culture and Spirituality.

So, I started (concurrently with some travels for documentation and understanding in some places from West and East etc.), starting from Romania, (with „Poezia”, and „Convorbiri literare”/ “Literary Conversation”¹³⁴), through South-Eastern Europe, with „Carmina Balcanica”, going then to the West and further, to Africa, Caribbean regions etc., with “Doina” (some issues, as it appeared), and completing the circle to East with „Kadō”.

Concerning the ethnic groups from Romania, for example, I initiated in „Poezia”, a column titled „The poetry of the minorities from Romania”, and creations signed by authors from various ethnic were published, thematic, in issues from „Carmina Balcanica” or „Kadō”. In the same manner I proceed with the Romanian authors from abroad – I initiated in „Poezia” a column titled

¹³⁴ Maybe the most prestigious cultural magazine from Romanian, founded in March 1, 1867, where I own now a column titled “Foreign book”, and an other to book review books from my region.

„A Romanian language poetry map”, where I published authors from a region of Romania and Romanian authors form an abroad community or a country or other.

Various issues of these magazines dedicated to some countries or ethno-linguistic communities (for these we collaborate with poetry, essays, book reviews, cultural news etc authors from that places/ countries) showed that various interesting aspects.

Speaking about dedicated issues, for example „Kadō” has issues for Crimea, Turkey, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina etc.

I tried also to apply various analyze methods starting from some „variables” and characteristics/ social indexes which, corroborated can give an better image (such as: index about gender, the report individuals – social group, national or regional index – which in particular situations are associated with aspects pending by ethnic/ religious/ linguistic differences, even inside a country - power distance index, I followed the generation/ class/ budget/ gender/ education etc. factors) facing with what I could see in each situation going there, on the place itself. And, many times, the concepts were “adjusted”/ “gradated” in my perception by the reality¹³⁵.

All this didn’t changed my profoundly basic opinions, but they created for me a better and much gradated image of the manner we perceive from distance a “culture”, of the way they are build educational directions/ how inter-act some factors pending by social/ economic/ professional or/ and social mobility, macro-politic movements concerning individuals, and the culture of different peoples/ groups.

It is obvious that the world (and culture) evolves, there are all sort of changing which generate all sort of effects, but I really believe that Knowing through culture is an important step to accept one to each over and to deal better difficult moments. You could maybe even find a useful tool to have a different but better way to built the peace, or to repair war damages. And I don’t want to be in the position to ask myself (as, unfortunately, we are doing from centuries) “how is when a language in which was written a poem is dying near you). I am truly convinced that the world is so beautiful maybe mostly through its diversity. Real/ Concrete situations need a correct understanding, beyond politics or concepts, and mostly a perception which need to be earnest reflected and to transmit a clear, intelligible for the readers pending to the cultural matrix you address to.

¹³⁵ I red rather recently some interesting papers which had various perspectives and about the differences between “theory” and “reality”/ what can you see “there”; I notice some of these: Ji Li, Leonard Karakowsky, *Do We See Eye-to-Eye? Implications of Cultural Differences for Cross-Cultural Management Research and Practice*, in *The Journal of Psychology*, 135 (5), 2001, p. 501-517.

Name: Marius Chelariu, Pen Name: Marius Chelaru, DOB: 30,08,1961, Negrești city, Vaslui district, Romania; Present days – live in Iași, where he graduated in Economics, University “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”; contributor with articles/ poems/ critics & work as editor& editor in chief, editorial advisor etc. from some cultural magazines: *Timpul/ Time*, *Cronica/ Chronicle*, *Convorbiri Literare/ Literary Conversations*, *Poezia/ Poetry*, *Carmina Balcanica*, “Agathos”: An International Review of the Humanities and Social Sciences etc., or Publishing Houses as: *Junimea* (1994-1998, editor, 1998-1999: editor in chief, 1999-2000: Director), *Sakura* (1999- 2002, Director), *Parnas* (2000- 2002), *Timpul/ Time* (2001-2003, Executive Director), Secretary of Association of Magazines and Publications from Europe ș.a. He is co-founder of - “Carmina Balcanica” - Review of South-East european Spirituality and Culture - „Doina”, **Revue de Littérature, Civilisation et Culture Universelle, bilingue, franco-roumaine, Paris, France**; Contributor with articles, poems essay, prose, translations etc. in various international anthologies, and in magazines/ journals from Romania,USA, England, Belgium, Canada, Sweden, Italy, Paraguay, Japan, Egipt, Jordan, Vietnam, Lebanon, Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania, Holland ș.a. Member of Romanian Writers Society, member of the famous club **Junimea** from Iași, honorary member of *Maison Naaman pour la Culture*, Beirut, Liban, Member of Romanian haiku Society, Member of *World Haiku Association*, Japan, Member of Romanian Language Writers from *Québec*, Canada, published more than 30 books (novels, poems, critics, essays, translations); he was awarded with some national/ international literary prizes.

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