

The Concept of “Border” in Latin American Humanitarian Thought during the Second Half of the 20th Century

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Abstract: The urgency of the problem under investigation is conditioned by the fact that the 20th century intensifies the research in the field of culture, related to cultural and historical interaction issues or the dialogue of cultures including the issue of “culture frontier” which is most clearly manifested in the Latin American cultural space. The study aims to identify regional, Latin American specifics of historical and cultural border by addressing the basic conceptual approaches to Latin American humanitarian thought of the second half of the 20th century. The leading approach to the study of this issue is the method of comparative research directed analysis and the comparison of research experience in the Latin American humanitarian thought. The main results in the study reflect the development trends of “culture frontier” in contemporary Latin American scientific thought and the provision of the attempt concerning the historical and cultural specifics of the region development on their basis. The materials of the study may be useful in the cultural study as well as in the studies of historical and philosophical nature.

Key words: Latin American culture, border, the frontier of cultures, intercultural border, historical and cultural identity, Leopoldo Zea

INTRODUCTION

The issue of “culture frontier” is one of the most relevant problems in Latin humanitarian thought of the second half of the 20th century. The category of “cultural frontier” is represented by the evolution of concept etymology and the identification of regional, Latin American specifics of historical and cultural border. During the consideration of “culture frontier” concept one may describe, characterize, analyze and later, possibly reconstruct the problems of cultural and historical interactions multicultural regions of the world, the shifting of cultural boundaries in the historical context and the manifestation of “frontier” in various cultural artifacts.

“Frontier of cultures” contributed to the birth of Latin American culture identity problem, the problem of finding its Latin American identity. The specifics of the Latin American region culture were formed as the result of centuries-old interaction between the indigenous (Indian), European (Spanish-Iberian) and African origins. The roots of Latin American specificity should be found in the process of cross-breeding, that is a merger of different cultural and ethnic elements into a new whole. Such combinatorics of different cultural components allowed to define the culture of Latin America as a dialogic one.

This research project is presented by the analysis of two concepts that made a significant influence on modern Latin American culture, the concept of “juxtaposition” by Leopoldo Zea and the concept of “cross-cultural borders” by Jose Luis Gomez-Martinez. L. Zea, the professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) developed a unique methodological approach to the study of Latin American history and culture issues (“Latin American philosophy of nature”), created on the basis of history and culture study methods popular among Latin American intellectuals (the philosophy of Ortega-y-Gasset), civilizational approach of A. Toynbee, Marxism. Jose Luis Gomez-Martinez, the successor of L. Zea research, the professor at the University of Georgia in the United States develops the concept of Latin America “cross-cultural border” according to the positions post structuralism and voices it in the analysis of L. Zea creative heritage.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The problem of dialog development in Latin American culture had a great scientific impact. Since, the mid 90s of the 20th century Europe had a series of conferences devoted to the problems of Mediterranean culture dialogue, the dialogue of cultures and multiculturalism in Switzerland, the dialogue of cultures and tolerance in the

Balkan region and the dialogue of cultures, realized through the West-East relationship in Eurasia. In respect of Latin American cultural situation, the problem of culture dialogue is considered through the prism of Leopoldo Zea, the Mexican thinker creative heritage of the 20th century. The problem of “culture frontier” as one of the central categories of L. Zea research approach in modern Latin American problem is studied not as an independent research problem but as one of Latin America cultural history components. Mid 80s early 90s of the 20th century were marked by the emergence of a number of works in periodicals (usually Cuban ones), considering the ratio of civilization and Marxist approaches to the history of Latin America in Zea methodology (Diaz, 1990, 1988). Certain aspects of Zea creativity are considered by Lertora (1988), (the problems of Latin American cultural identity), Krumpev (2003) (dialogic basis of the Zea very concept).

Small articles of Gomez-Martinez (1994, 1997) “En dialogo con Zea (1991): para una filosofia de la liberacion” and “Mestizaje” y “frontiera” como categorias de cultura iberoamericana. Estudios Interdisciplinarios de America Latina y El Caribe” are noteworthy. However, in these articles Gomes-Martinez (1994) attempted to understand the concept of “dialogue of cultures” in L. Zea interpretation for the first time. Gomes-Martinez considers two fundamental characteristics of the Latin American culture, marked by L. Zea as a cultural-historical crossbreeding and cross-cultural border, providing the dialogical culture of Latin America.

Another important author, exploring L. Zea creativity is R. Fomet-Betancour and his work “Leopoldo Zea ola passion por el transito de la dependencia a la liberacion”. Then Fomet-Betancourt (1988) turns to the problem of dialogical understanding of Latin America culture by Latin American thinkers, including L. Zea. According to Fomet-Betancourt, L. Zea is a “lump”, symbolizing the process of intelligent understanding of Latin American culture, the establishment and further development of which is a part of the cultural dialogue. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, L. Zea represents an intellectual dialogue that is manifested in the dialogue with different European methodological traditions and in mutual exchange of ideas and in direct scientific contacts.

At the beginning of the new millennium, the researchers turned to such aspects of L. Zea scientific research as the problem of the “center and periphery” by Valdes (2003), the problem of “Latin American universalism” Lobato (2003), the problem “of Latin American discourse” by Luno (2003), etc.

Russian Latin American culture of the second half of the 20th century is mainly engaged in the issues related to

the history of Latin America, the history of the Latin American region political parties, the analysis of the current political, economic and social issues of the Latin American reality. The art and culture of Latin America actualized only at the turn of 80-90s of the 20th century. The problem of “culture frontier” was first mentioned in the monographs of Ya.G. Shemyakin and V.B. Zemskov that allowed to develop the concept of culture synthesis in Latin America and the idea of a new chronotope development in Latin American culture. Many modern scholars believe that the real frontier world may be presented only by two cultural-historical regions Russia and Latin America, which turned “into a kind of rugged terrain” (Sofronova, 2000). However, this does not preclude the admissibility, the possibility and the necessity of the existence of other frontier historical and cultural worlds. One of the leading Russian Latin America culture researches Shemyakin (2001). considers the frontier situation in Latin America as the main research “message” as first of all, the civilization processes taking place in this situation impact the whole humanity; secondly, this region is fundamentally different and has a much higher level of civilization system diversity; thirdly, this is the place of historic meeting, mixing and interaction not only the majority of the peoples and cultures but also of all existing races.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The culture of the Latin American region was formed as the result of century-long interaction between the indigenous (Indian) and European (Spanish-Iberian) origins. The understanding of the cultural-historical “mission” that befell on each participant of interaction, the determination of a type, a level and the results of dialogue relations between Indians and Europeans may reveal the historical essence and the nature of present (and still evolving) Latin America culture.

This problem includes the search for the Latin American “self”, “identity”, the place of Latin American culture in the world historical and cultural process was the central problem of the Latin American humanities creative heritage.

The history of humanities development in relation to the Latin American culture allows you to define the latter as a dialogic one which is indicated by a number of specific characteristics. One of the first such features of a Latin American culture is “the frontier of cultures”.

During the morphological analysis of the word “border” one may distinguish a root, a word foundation derived from the word “borderland”. The border may also

act as a psychological concept, as a kind of an edge, an emotional limit beyond which completely unpredictable actions may follow. The border may also act as a kind of marker that defines and separates. And in the field of mathematics one may find the following meanings of the concept, a set of boundary points. Accordingly, the term "frontier" acts as a kind of a special zone that separates and connects two opposite things. Moreover, this area may also act as a clear facet and as a kind of a buffer zone, and as a subtle, amorphous, marginal limit.

In this case, the thing will be about a well defined watershed "a frontier of cultures". The situation of "a frontier of cultures" may describe, characterize, analyze and, later, possibly reconstruct such problems as "the interaction of various national cultures", the cultures of different ages, the formation of different kinds of art, styles and genres" (Sofronova, 2000). The situation of "a frontier of cultures" "marks the possibilities of meetings in the area of cultural borderland", creates "multiple layers of historical and cultural processes" that contribute to the development of dialogic nature of culture. "The future of culture is developed here, new language, ideological, genre conglomerates are born here" (Mikhailov, 1990).

Basically, the problem of "a frontier of cultures" was developed in the Russian historiography. For the first time, the term "a frontier of cultures" was used in Lotman (1992)'s work "About semiosphere". Lotman defines "a frontier of cultures" as follows: "a frontier is an area of cultural bilingualism, ensuring semiotic contacts between two worlds, the area of "creolized" semiotic cultures, if from the point of view of its immanent mechanism a frontier connects two spheres of semiosis then from the perspective of semiotic consciousness of this semiosphere it separates them. Here, we talk about the awareness of its specificity, emphasizing those features absoluteness by which this sphere is marked".

Then, the concept of "a frontier of cultures" was supported by Bakhtin (1972) as a starting point for the study of dialogical relations. Bakhtin wrote the following: "After all, dialogical relationship phenomenon is much broader than the relationships between the replicas of a compositionally expressed dialogue this is almost a universal phenomenon permeating all human speech and all relationships and manifestations of human life, everything that has meaning and significance; someone's mind can not be contemplated or analyzed".

The humanitarian Latin American culture in the framework of this research problem is presented by two concepts; the concept of "juxtaposition" by Leopoldo Zea and the concept of "cross-cultural border" by Jose Gomez-Martinez (2003).

Zea (1990, 1976, 1991) uses the term "border zone" in his research (this term is used only in Russian historical science); L. Zea uses the term "juxtaposition". The term "juxtaposition" is an analog of a later term "frontier". Frontier is considered both as a concept, demonstrating the geographical proximity of studied cultures and as a sign of culture, developed as the result of a dialogue.

Zea (1976) states that Latin America passed several phases in its cultural and historical development the "projects" of history and culture, throughout its cultural and historical development and developed in the situation of "juxtaposition". The situation of "juxtaposition" was generated by colonization from the Iberian peninsula and from the European continent as whole (including the US). "This juxtaposition implies the depersonalization of colonized ones as deprives them of any right to perceive the values which a colonizer considers only as his own privilege as their own. And that wittingly or unwittingly prohibition applies not only to the Indians but also to the Creoles and half-breeds. Indians are imposed by an alien culture that sees him only as a tool of service. Creole, as a master of an Indian, inhibits the latter not on its own behalf but on behalf of a one who acts as a master in respect of him, a representative of a metropolis. As for a half-breed, a son of an Iberian and an Indian woman, he tends, though hopelessly, to his father's world, trying to be his part and ashamed of his mother's line; a half-bred feels himself as a bastard: rejected by one world, he also refuses to recognize himself as the part of another world. In all these cases there is a phenomenon of juxtaposition, excluding assimilation".

Gomez-Martinez (1994) in the brochure "Mestizaje" y "frontiera" como categorias de cultura iberoamericana. Estudios Interdisciplinarios de America Latina y El Caribe, published in 1994 does not consider the issue of a cultural frontier in the region for the first time, but he provides a detailed analysis of L. Zea position in this matter. It should be noted that Gomez-Martinez uses the concept of "cross-cultural frontier" that is identical to the concept of "a frontier of cultures".

First of all Gomez-Martinez (1994) reveals the origins of L. Zea position on the issue of a frontier of cultures. He believes that L. Zea creates a "synthesis" idea on the frontier of cultures, combining an imaginative vision of the situation D. Sarmiento, where the cultural boundary shows a confrontation between civilization and barbarism, the overcoming of which leads to a mutual understanding and M. Estrada approach. In which the existence of cultural boundary creates "a new observatory" as being on the "edge" of the cultural world, you can be in the range of a new (non-Eurocentric) "observation

post". Secondly, Gomes-Martinez demonstrates L. Zea interpretation of "cross-cultural boundary" concept. Gomes-Martinez wrote that according to L. Zea the original meaning of "cross-cultural border" concept faded by the middle of the 20th century. He faded: it became petrified. "Intercultural border" ceased to be a watershed between a conquered one and a conqueror, between the known one and the things that had to be discovered; it turned into a "juxtaposition" space, in the search for the ways to live, overcoming division.

In later work, "La cultura 'indigena' como realidad intercultural. Cuadernos Americanos. Nueva Epoca". Published in 1997, the concept of "cross-cultural frontier" is considered by Gomes-Martinez not only as a cultural abstraction but as a specific product of a geographically distant center, a real ancient cultural center and an omnipresent and an oppressive Western European cultural center.

The result of "juxtaposition" situation (L. Zea) and the process of colonization in Latin America was a racial and a cultural cross-breeding. In the course of the performed study the following results were obtained.

First of all, the term "juxtaposition" which introduces into the scientific use L. Zea in the mid 70s of the 20th century is an analog of a later term "frontier". A border is considered both as a concept, demonstrating the geographical proximity of studied cultures and as a sign of culture, developed as the result of a dialogue. L. Zea notes that Latin America which passed several phases in its cultural and historical development the "projects" of history and culture throughout its cultural and historical development, developed into the situation of "juxtaposition".

Secondly, at that Gomez-Martinez (2003, 2004) uses the concept of a cross-cultural border", identical to the concept of "a frontier of cultures". The concept of "a cross-cultural frontier" is perceived by Gomes-Martinez not only as a cultural abstraction but as a specific product of a geographically distant center, the real ancient cultural center of an omnipresent and an oppressive Western European cultural center.

Thirdly, the result of "a frontier of cultures" situation in Latin America was a racial and a cultural cross-breeding as evidenced by two researchers.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the situation of "a frontier of cultures" was a common one to all regions of the world at different stages of their development. For the Latin American region "a frontier of cultures" became one of the characteristic features of cultural identity. Regardless of a humanitarian terminology used in Latin American philosophy a single

view of its importance is developed in the formation of a historical and a cultural identity of contemporary Latin America. As the prospects for the study of this issue one may define the following:

- The consideration of other approaches to the study of "frontier" category in intercultural context within the Latin American research environment
- The interpretation of the "other" category which arose in the framework of postmodern cultural studies which have a particular importance to the Latin American culture
- Identification of the dialogue characteristics of Latin American culture, generated by the situation of "a frontier of cultures", the study of specific cultural expressions of "a frontier of cultures" in Latin American region.

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