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THE SACRED, THE SPIRITUAL AND THE RELIGIOUS IN CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL SOCIETIES

INTERNATIONAL ONLINE STUDY DAY

December 14, 2023

PRESENTATION

Universalized, secular and democratic post-modern societies, under the aegis of unbridled freedom and limitless growth, are leading us today, more than ever, to reinterrogate man's relationship with his beliefs in his biocenosis. Thinking of the sacred, the spiritual, the religious, from an absolute point of view, involves a semantic, semiotic and implex mental hierarchy understood in a dichotomous relationship focused on paradigmatic dyads:

- city / countryside
- nature / culture
- civilization / barbarism
- deep country / imaginary country
- dream country / real country
- autochthony / universality
- universal / diversel (pluriversal)
- emic point of view (from within the social group) / etic point of view (from the observer's point of view)

The relationship between these terms depends on one's perspective. We must recognize that there is a differentiation between the terms sacred/spiritual/religious, but also that it is difficult to establish a boundary between them.

To begin with, we know that the sacred is a particular status linked to myths that refers to the subject, to essence, to ontological depth and its relationship to the divine sphere, to the notion of interiority, of nature, of innateness; it is characterized by the active power of divinity, that feeling of absolute presence, of divine presence. It is both mystery and terror. It is the being of nature, living in the present moment, whereas religion, inseparable from society, brings us back to the concept of culture, of what has been acquired, keeping us in the past and projecting us into the future. It is thought of as a human experience, an external construct, it becomes an object of knowledge, part of collective worship, and in the light of historical evolution, it leads to a cosmetic approach to the world (colonialist, transhumanist...), a dispossession of the characteristics of the human being, or even a projection of the human ideal into an imaginary world.

Spirituality, the preferred domain of the human sciences, also concerns all those who survey the territory of the mind, and is approached with circumspection, with the difficult neutrality that falls to rational, Cartesian minds. In such matters, any system of thought, any attempt at conceptualization is confronted with the irreducible complexity of a protean reality that transcends the field of discourse.

As for religion, it can be understood as any specific system of belief, worship, etc., often implying a moral code, whereas spirituality - which is not exclusive of religion, since atheistic, secular or pagan spiritualities can be found - focuses on things and the immaterial world, the world of spirits. It implies a quest, a questioning, a path, a reason. That said, this belief system is rarely unanimous, and in the history of mankind has regularly been involved in conflicts whose intensity demonstrates that the sharing of the sacred does not always overlap with the "sharing of the sensible". In regions of the world where various cultural practices come into contact, exchanges and new creations resulting from appropriations and re-appropriations offer a most interesting subject for study, and invite us to rethink the paradigms of syncretism and super-syncretism (Benítez-Rojo, 2010).

Conceptually, these notions - sacred, spiritual, religious - are associated with a diversity of representations which, in the collective imagination, rarely carry the same semantic, semiological or even gnostic weight in literature, science, the arts and cultural practices. Do they refer to the same meanings in terms of the scholarly observer's reception of the cult communities and cultural ethopoeias, of the theocratic ecosystems he is targeting? From a civilizational point of view, what cultural shocks, or relational ecologies, do they provide access to?

The worlds of literary and artistic creation in the South are precisely scriptural, oracular, sonic, hermetic or heterogeneous worlds where language, the Word, resonance, cosmic energy... are created, and where we tend to reconfigure these terminologies. What, then, of literature and the arts? How do novelists, poets and artists reintegrate or reappropriate these lost frequential spaces of the Republic of Human Sciences? Are aesthetic strategies, however minimal, perceptible, conceivable or tangible?

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

As these lines of inquiry are not intended to be exhaustive, contributors are encouraged to explore other aspects of the issue along the conceptual lines indicated. Interdisciplinary and comparative approaches to this theme are strongly encouraged. Contributions at the intersection of literature, the arts and anthropology (among others) will also be particularly appreciated. With this in mind, proposals may be drawn from related disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary fields. To this end, contributors may draw inspiration from the following areas:

- literary studies;
- visual and performing arts: painting, sculpture, graphic arts, performance art, etc. ;
- philosophy, psychology and theology;
- human and social sciences: history, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, political science;
- the study of life, pharmacopoeia and the resurgence of ancestral practices;
- a diversity of related and diasporic fields: cultural studies, migration studies, etc.

Proposals for contributions should include a title and an abstract of no more than 400 words, accompanied by 5 keywords. They should be accompanied by a brief biobibliographical note, not exceeding 150 words.

Proposals for contributions, in English, French or Spanish, accompanied by a short biobibliographical note, must be sent by October 30, 2023 at the latest. For further information, please send an email to the same address. Please send your abstract (300 words maximum) + 5 keywords to nakanJE1contributions@gmail.com and nakanjournal@gmail.com, together with a brief biobibliographical note specifying your institutional affiliation. Contributions will take the form of a 20-minute academic paper followed by a 10-minute discussion.

SELECTION AND PROGRAMMING PROCESS

- Until October 30, 2023: submission of abstracts and biobibliographical notes
- November 1 to November 9, 2023: selection of proposals.
- November 10, 2023: notification of authors.
- December 1, 2023: distribution and publication of the study day program.

PUBLICATION

Please note that the study day will take place online. Contributions likely to be recorded on video may be uploaded - with the panelists' explicit agreement - to AMC's Canal-U channel. A recording and broadcast authorization will be sent to all contributors whose proposals have been selected. Following the event, they will be invited to submit an article proposal to *NaKaN, a Journal of Cultural Studies*.

ORGANIZATION

NaKaN Learned Society, University of the French West Indies & University of Mayotte.

TIMETABLE AND TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

Please send your abstract (300 words maximum) + 5 keywords to nakanJE1contributions@gmail.com and nakanjournal@gmail.com, together with a brief biobibliographical note specifying your institutional affiliation. Contributions to this multidisciplinary study day may take the form of a 20-minute academic paper followed by a 10-minute discussion.

Agenda

- Deadline for proposals: October 1, 2023
- Scientific Committee response: October 5, 2023
- Program submission: October 15, 2023

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Dr. Gérald Désert, Université des Antilles

Dr. Nathalie Bouchaut-Kancel, Université des Antilles

Dr. Frédéric Lefrançois, University of the French West Indies

Prof. Buata Malela, CUFR de Mayotte

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