

The East and the West: From holism to dialogue through confrontation

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Abstract

The article deals with the development of Western and Eastern civilisations and their movement away from unity through opposition in order to seek ways out of geopolitical crisis. It is known that of all the bipolarities defining the general trends of cultural development in the modern world, the one of greatest significance refers to the "East-West" divide. The multiplicity of cultural worlds that represents humanity tends to be recast into the metacultural "East-West" dichotomy. It is well known that this kind of bipolarity has been a source of destructive historical events (the Balkans in Europe, Hindustan Peninsula, the Maghreb countries, etc.). However, history also offers some examples which prove the existence of the possibility of dialogic confrontation resolution (e.g., the synthesis from which Moorish culture²⁶ was formed when Spain was conquered by the Arabs or the Métis in the Americas). The article concludes that the spiritual "flight to the East" in European culture began in the early 1960s, and even now it is a very important indicator. Eastern aesthetics influenced the nature of Western art during the last decades of the 20th century. The impact of Western culture turned out to be highly significant for the philosophical and aesthetic postulates of Chan (Zen) Buddhism, as well as other religious and philosophical ideas of the East. In the 20th century, Europe - the successor of ancient spiritual values - gave its attention to the religious and philosophical systems of the East, trying to work out a new crisis-free attitude. The relations between the West and the East became isolated; and now we talk of the quantity and quality of their perception of each other, about how to find a new, global syncretism of Eastern and Western civilisations whilst retaining both their identities and their distinctiveness.

Keywords

Ancient civilisation, East-West, Eastern philosophy, Flight to the East, Interaction-dialogue, Nation states, Zen Buddhism