

To join the two cultures better old than young persons

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Abstract

After the 2nd world war Europe had to recover acceptable life conditions. The economic miracle succeeded in obtaining this recovery in a really very short time. With reference to my country, Italian money in 1962 won the prize of the best European money, and this occurred after only 18 years from the end of war. This success was possible thanks to scientific research and innovation about new materials, first of all plastics, new machines, new managing capacities. But this medal beside this positive face has got another one negative: since that time for about twenty years research was only considered as such if applied to economic advantages so bringing to a progressive separation between hard science such as physics, biology, particularly chemistry, the only one discipline corresponding to an homonymous industry, and soft science, humanism, art, history, letters. In few years this situation fell into what we called the option of the two cultures, or if you prefer of art and science. This situation was strengthened by the wish of some scientific Schools and Academies to prevail on the other ones. So culture always more appeared as a cake of which each one of the stakeholders wanted to manage their personal slice. This new frame was negatively paid by research that, deprived of its humanistic component, lost the role played before on interface between education and industrial economy. Many years passed before that art and science would have been able to understand that this disarticulation of culture was a terrible error and a redial process could start. The first steps occurred at the university level where the degree courses were activated with a crossing vision through humanistic and scientific faculties: in history of art and in archaeology it is impossible to proceed without science, and science cannot do without humanistic applications. Cultural Heritage became so a bridge between the two cultures. Today this process has run forward and the so called two cultures are always nearer in a unitary vision of culture. But this process needs to be continuously powered to avoid back steps. Our young students and citizens lived only partially the full process I have described to you today so that for them it is difficult to recognize dangers and options related to it. We old who suffered this debate and the disarticulation of culture probably have the antibodies to avoid any possible back way. So, we emeriti and retired professors can play a meaningful role in the direction to consolidate this restored cultural unity. We can do this by supporting and promoting events where the two cultures are present both together on looking at aspects of humanism in science and of the latter in the former: for instance, correlation between art and environment (how many paintings dedicated to nature and landscape!), between history and innovation, between old and new instruments.