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Spaces for debating on culture

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Some people say that social networks, due to its immediacy, its mobilization capacity, its democratic nature (we could say “democratic,” though: such democracy is quite relative), have jeopardized traditional journalism. Some believe that at what some call (in an obvious conceptual misunderstanding) “citizen journalism,” the lifelong journalism has lost its punch when it comes to strengthen, and even set, public agendas. Some ideologists of contemporaneity believe that social networks are the ideal space for debating on the Cuban culture. We have the opinion that the discussions the Cuban culture needs and deserves must be extended to others spaces as well: mass media, for example.

But, what are the debates we actually need? One of high-mindedness and historical rigor. A debate with arguments, with feasible proposals, with in-depth knowledge, and ethical purpose. A debate focused on major subjects, not on street fights, revenge, or personal vindications. Decency, knowledge, intellectual dignity. That is what we need. And there are uncountable examples in social networks where these goals are not accomplished.

We are not saying we must ignore Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube...No. We need to embrace the culture of their regular use, master their logics aiming at making the most of the promotion and analysis of the best of Cuban culture.

But render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's.

Media addressing culture have the responsibility to host serious debates and promote them. They have the responsibility to shape up an agenda and address it in a way that it meets the needs, problems, and conflicts in the implementation of the cultural policy...As well as with the self-fulfillment, achievement and success of that very same agenda, which are many, by the way.

The limits to this critical exercise cannot be defined by rote. In other words, art has an impact in every domain of society. And culture is much more than artistic culture. We can (and must) debate or argue about several subjects, if and when the basic rules of courtesy are respected as well as the principles of those involved in discussions.

In a country besieged by decades, the defense of national sovereignty is not a minor issue. And the cultural debate may and must focused on strengthening that defense. Cuban culture has never been linked to concessions before. It has been, in fact, a culture of resistance and reaffirmation of our identity. It has been the legacy of our heroes. We have always highlighted the enormous privilege of having in our most brilliant hero, José Martí, one of our greatest poet.

In the complex media panorama, when some want to use debates on our culture in some sort of relatively obvious strategy to promote a regime change, we must be well aware of what is the point of discussion, why we debate and the intended goal. Our national independence is sacred. Mass media addressing Cuban culture must be up to the task.

*A version of this comment was broadcasted by the Cultural TV News on Cuba's National Television.*

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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