

Cultural Diversity and Social Qualities of Time as Expressed by the Performing Arts

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About one century ago, anthropologists addressed the methodological issues regarding time and space for social anthropology. They noted that collective representations of time do not passively reflect time, but time and space are mediated by society. By our actions, such as making music and dancing, *we create time*. Different cultures may experience and perceive 'time' in different ways, and within one cultural group the *quality of time* is not always the same.

Earlier some scholars classified cultures as using only a linear or only a cyclic concept of time. However, it is not that simple, as anthropological studies have shown that generally time tends to be perceived as both a linear flow and as repetitive. Also, we should not confuse metaphysical and sociological arguments about time. Ideas about re-birth and 'notions of infinity' have to do with the metaphysical level, whereas 'time' in music and other performing arts has to do with the social level.

Hence, social time is created by human beings, and making music or performing a play is one of the means to experience and measure time. I shall address the variety of social qualities of time, related to cultural diversity, as it becomes manifest in the performing arts. I shall discuss the issue of cultural diversity by looking at different forms of cultural representations, such as rituals, pop music, film clips and the way different states represent items of their cultural heritage, for instance on the Representative List of the 2003 UNESCO convention.