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erschienen am: 13. Oktober 2009

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## **2nd World Culture Forum in Dresden**

### **Is the New Media a Threat or an Opportunity for German Culture?**

**by Mariana Bozesan**

**13 Oct 2009 at 01:38AM**

I just came back from the 2nd World Culture Forum In Dresden/Germany where I was on a panel discussing whether the new media (i.e. ipod, Internet, mobile phones etc.) are contributing to our cultural education in a positive way or not. I was quite surprised to learn how difficult it still is for many Germans - especially the middle to old aged ones - to allow these new media into their lives in a way that is enriching, positive, and contributes to global inter-connectivity between people.

I went away with the feeling that middle-aged Germans often fear that their culture is being lost along with its aging population. We have not yet found a way to transcend and include the challenges of modern times in a positive way and fear will not be a good servant either. Opening up to the "flattening" world seems to be perceived more like a threat rather than a beautiful way for German culture to preserve, transform, and positively influence global culture. This feeling, of course, is not shared by the few young individuals that were also present at the conference.

Within this context, it was very refreshing to experience His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, who was awarded the first World Culture Award, and who invited the conference audience to transcend fear by focusing on and practicing non-violence for the benefit of all. Unfortunately, several participants did not welcome the guided meditation session with His Holiness saying that meditation is a private issue that should not be done in public.

Namaste!

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