

Problems of Further Development of Cultural Studies as a Science

Natalya Evgenyevna Shafazhinskaya*

Razumovsky Moscow State University of Technologies and Management, Moscow, Russia

Ekaterina Alekseevna Topalova

Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russia

Irina Sergeevna Kazakova

Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russia

Ekaterina Yuryevna Ivanova

Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russia

Aleksandr Vladlenovich Kamenets

Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russia

Abstract

The paper is devoted to the possibilities of humanitarian and socio-scientific approach to the study of culture, which is of key importance for the further existence of cultural studies as a science and educational discipline. The most significant characteristics of these approaches and their heuristic potential are revealed. Humanitarian-oriented studies of culture are considered as the basis for socio-scientific knowledge of cultural phenomena and processes. The negative consequences of the opposition between humanitarian and socio-scientific research for the consistency of the knowledge about culture are shown. The strategy of synthesis of rational-scientific and artistic-figurative knowledge of cultural reality is proposed. The overall composition of scientific disciplines as a source for the humanitarian and socio-scientific study of culture and their desired relationship in the form of configurations that provide a holistic view of the cultural processes and phenomena, as well as objectivity of scientific results, are considered. The article may be of interest to a wide range of specialists studying the problems of culture.

Keywords: Culture; Cultural studies; Science; Research; Humanitarian; Social, Artistic; Tradition; Innovation.



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1. Introduction

The current state of cultural studies is characterized by its division into two main scientific areas, which draw the attention of many authoritative researchers. A.Ya. Flier notes that "the views on culture and profiles of cultural science are divided into two directions: humanitarian and sociological/anthropological" (Flier and Astafyeva, 2018) or socio-anthropological. In this regard, there was a kind of "division of labor" between the scientists, tending to one or the other of the above fields. Moreover, while the Western European and American researchers mostly develop socio-anthropological and adjacent ethnological problems, based on the study of culture mainly in the social context, in the Russian tradition, the humanitarian direction prevails (Astafyeva, 2018; Okeanskiy, 2011; Selezneva and Kamenetz, 2013), the scientific substantiation of which is disputed by a number of Russian researchers standing on socio-anthropological or cultural-anthropological positions (Orlova, 2004; Reznik, 2012).

Behind this division, there are fundamentally opposite interpretations of the main object of research – culture. The humanitarian researchers insist that the culture objectively exists as the value content of human existence, which can't be reduced to a system of social relations and interactions and represents well-established values and norms of any human activity (Ikonnikova and Bolshakov, 2010; Solonin and Kagan, 2012). Accordingly, the very etymology of the concept of culture is associated with the word "cult" i.e. with the belief in ideal, which has become a regulator of social, economic, political and other human activity.

The proponents of the socio-anthropological approach in the studies of culture define the latter as the mastery of knowledge, skills and social adaptation necessary for the existence and self-preservation of individuals, different societies, ethnic communities, groups. The concept of culture is most often interpreted as leading its origin from the cultivation of the soil, which formed the basis of agriculture, and then the whole world civilization, where more and more advanced technologies that transform the world to achieve an increasingly comfortable living environment come to the fore.

At the same time, the "pantophagy" and multidirectionality of socio- and cultural-anthropological research has led to the fact that the very category of culture becomes a concept, but not a real object of study, as some Russian anthropologists believe. On the other hand, the rejection of cultural studies of the scientific achievements of social and cultural anthropology turns this science into a purely descriptive empirical science, based only on hypothetical conceptual constructions and hypotheses, but not on the facts and patterns of scientific nature. In order to resolve this

contradiction, an appropriate method of studying the possibilities of humanitarian and socio-scientific approach in the study of culture, based on the principle of their complementarity, is necessary.

2. Methods

The principle of complementarity mentioned above presupposes the consideration of the humanitarian and socio-scientific approaches in the studies of culture on their "counter-movement" to each other. If the humanitarian orientation, one way or another, appeals to the spiritual content of culture in its movement to sociality, the socio-scientific orientation is based on social facts with their subsequent understanding in the spiritual and cultural context. Behind these movements, there is a long tradition of confrontation between two spiritual and ideological attitudes, which can be represented in the form of appropriate antithesis: "In the beginning, was the Word" or "In the beginning was the Deed".

In the cultural context, the first of them was embodied in the Russian culture with its Byzantine Christian heritage (Zenkovskiy, 2011). The second one is embodied in the formation of the image of the Western European Faust with his ancient and Renaissance origins. In the first case, the culture develops on the basis of certain "cultural texts" of sacred significance. In the second case – a variety of transformative activities becomes the basis of cultural development of a person and society (Giddens, 2005; Parsons, 2002).

It is obvious that the ideal option would be to combine these processes in a single cultural evolution of mankind. But the absence of this combination has led to the consequences, which are fixed in a known saying: "Faith without works is dead, work without faith is blind". The Russian culture, with its literature-centricity and sacredness throughout its history quite often turned the "spirit" into a "letter", relying on the dogmatics "deadening" living cultural processes. In this respect, the Soviet period is no exception, when the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, which turned into a religious dogma, began to replace, very often, the true professionalism and real (and not imitated) social activity of the population.

In the European tradition, the opposite trend is observed: the excessive commitment to the "work" with an underestimation of the spiritual and cultural component generated and generates increased aggressiveness, consumerism, technocratic and destitute society, leaving no place for true humanity and spirituality.

Based on this methodological guidance let the authors now consider in general terms the composition of the cultural sciences and the possibilities of their further development on the basis of a synthesis of humanitarian and socio-scientific approaches.

3. Results

3.1. Humanitarian Approach to the Study of Culture

It has been stated above that this approach involves a movement from the study of culture as it is to the study of its impact on society. It is, therefore, based on disciplines that exist to a large extent autonomously from the changing social reality. It is philosophy, art studies, religious studies, history and psychology. While philosophy acts as the main methodological basis for cultural studies, in this case, because the laws studied by it are closest to the world of ideal and transcendent and, therefore, have a universal, timeless character, independent of certain social demands (Ogurtsov, 2006).

As a result, it is philosophy in combination with the other above-mentioned disciplines that create the scientific objectivity of cultural studies within the framework of the humanitarian approach. At the same time, the philosophy of culture remains as the basic one, and the other disciplines are the implementation of general philosophical constructions in the study of real problems of social practice. For example, philosophy as the basic discipline for art generates philosophy of art, which can be evaluated as the content of one of the possible directions of cultural studies, if they are focused on the study of *the real existence and development of a particular art form in a certain social and cultural environment*. Philosophy in combination with religious studies forms the philosophy of religion, which is studied in a specific social and ethnic, cultural and political context. Philosophy as the basis of psychology generates *existential problems of the existence of culture in a society as the creation of conditions of psychological well-being of a human*. It is significant, that it is the underestimation of the spiritual and philosophical aspect in the theory and practice of the study of psychological problems of an individual that does not allow one to identify ways to prevent and predict psychological problems, which for the most part have a spiritual nature. Philosophy as the basis of historical knowledge creates the philosophy of history, which in the cultural context studies *the spirit of historical events and facts, and not just their empirical characteristics*.

In accordance with the humanitarian approach, the main oppositions that originally formed the main problems of cultural studies can be reconsidered as follows. First of them is "culture – nature". Currently, this opposition has lost much of its heuristic significance due to its interpretation mainly from the standpoint of technologism (socio-anthropologically) because it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between the natural and cultural environment, since the latter has radically transformed the former, having deprived it of its original natural state as a human habitat.

The historians of cultural studies noted that, in the end, cultural studies have transformed the above-mentioned opposition in the triad "nature – culture – civilization", which filled each of its components with new meaning. Nature is now being studied as a prerequisite for the preservation of a proper cultural environment through the system of rules of land use, environmental protection, etc. At the same time, the attitude towards nature is conditioned by the peculiarities of people's culture, ethnicity and community living in this natural environment. It is important to note that the humanitarian approach examines the possibility of indirect impact of civilization on nature

through the formation of an appropriate system of cultural norms and values that are important for the self-preservation and development of groups and communities living in the territory.

Accordingly, the study of cultural ideals and values that can affect both civilizational processes and the entire productive life of people with social significance remains relevant.

It is important, that these concepts are not adequately studied within the framework of the socio-anthropological approach, which largely levels the extracted information about the characteristics of researchers of culture and its subjects. The humanitarian approach, based on philosophy, art studies, religious studies and psychology, reveals the essential characteristics of the spiritual identity of the carriers of culture and the internal logic of the relevant cultural processes and phenomena.

Dialogicality is also important for the humanitarian-oriented culturologists in presenting the results of their research since the very nature of humanitarian knowledge presupposes the dialogue and completion of information by the reader, listener, and viewer in the form of personal meanings and own conclusions. In this regard, the prevalence of artistic and figurative information in humanitarian studies of culture is not only evidence of the need for the adequacy of the language of the studied spiritual reality, but also an organic synthesis in the humanitarian cultural knowledge of rational and emotional (irrational) components that are important for fixing the entire diversity of cultural phenomena, often not explained only from the standpoint of abstract deductiveness. It is the emotionally, which mastered and transmitted cultural knowledge with the use of artistic and figurative language, in this case, that is able to influence the real society and its cultural content in the life of separate individuals and members of society.

In this regard, it should be noted that there are many cultural studies and relevant texts imitating the humanitarian approach in the form of abuse of the language of concepts and terms used by rational knowledge and not grasping the specificity of the whole variety of cultural facts and phenomena studied.

The next group of problems that sets the logic and content of the further development of cultural studies based on the humanitarian approach is the understanding of the role of religion in the preservation and development of culture as a manifestation of the basic laws of existence and development of culture, which is unacceptable in the socio-scientific approach to the study of cultural phenomena.

Socio-scientific approach to the study of culture

This approach is most fully represented in social and cultural anthropology, which claims to study social and cultural reality in accordance with the requirements of classical natural science research. These requirements include mandatory scientific procedures observation, measurement of the observed object (presence of certain quantitative and qualitative indicators) and experiment (natural or artificial). Socio-scientific studies of culture in one way or another try to meet these requirements.

One can see (as in the natural sciences) what is seen apparently: certain behavioral manifestations, artifacts, events. Wherever possible, a quantitative measure is introduced in the study of cultural processes (for example, from the standpoint of the evolutionary approach): "moving forward or backward", "above-below", "completely-imperfectly" on the basis of specified criteria for assessing a cultural phenomenon, artifact, event, etc. At the same time, social and cultural anthropology, with all its external neutrality, tends to the studied events, one way or another, as to social experimentation, developing and implementing appropriate projects to change the real social and cultural reality (an illustrative example is the theory and practice of modernization of various societies, endless postmodern experiments in the field of culture and art, etc.).

The main methodological basis of social and cultural anthropology is biology. It is not accidental in this regard that the domination of the evolutionary and neo-evolutionary paradigm, borrowed from the biological theory of natural selection, starts here. Other main scientific disciplines that are auxiliary in relation to biology are economics, sociology, ethnology and linguistics, the content of which is determined by the solution of the main task of social and cultural anthropology, the identification of objective laws of social adaptation of individuals to the environment and the corresponding cultural patterns and standards of social behavior (Ionin, 2004; Osipov, 2003). At the same time, the adaptation is considered as a possibility of physical survival of both individual members of society and various social groups, ethnic communities and societies. Accordingly, while remaining within the framework of the modernist project, social and cultural anthropology for some time studied various strategies and practices of adaptation processes taking into account the ethnic, cultural and social diversity.

At the same time, the very social reality under the influence of postmodernism is increasingly virtualized, turning into a set of simulacra with its symbolic communications. It is in this aspect that the microcosm of personality begins to be studied, in which postmodernists look for the remnants of vitality that disappeared under the influence of virtualization of the big society.

Thus, E.A. Orlova points out that the postmodern paradigm forms a new social reality in the minds of researchers, which helps to neutralize the uncertainty of an individual in his/her interaction with the artificial virtual sociality created by a person himself/herself. The main characteristics of this new reality, as the analysis of generalizations of this researcher shows, are as follows:

- search for the logic of direct social interactions between individuals from the standpoint of expediency for all their participants without taking into account individual interests;
- denial of the importance of individual creative functions of a person in accordance with his/her ideal aspirations and attitudes, with a focus on the pragmatics of social activity associated with the processes of biological adaptation and physical survival in society;
- the very same social reality is constructed as a result of an individual's autonomous reflection in his/her interaction with others, but not in accordance with the uniquely interpreted cultural norms and standards set from the outside;

- an individual in this reflection turns into a purely rational subject, seeking to control the created social reality with the use of his/her own mind; thus, uncertainty and unpredictability for the acting subject are minimized (Orlova, 2010).

All these characteristics of the created social reality in accordance with the postmodern attitudes can be interpreted as an exclusively artificially created construct, which imitates rather than stimulates real-life processes and the feeling of fullness of life with the presence of irrationality in it as a manifestation of feeling and faith. An individual inevitably acquires the features of a biorobot, finally breaking with its own primordial existential environment, typical for the micro-level of social existence.

4. Discussion

The consideration of the possibilities of further development of the two above-mentioned approaches to cultural studies seems promising if one accepts as a starting thesis the assessment of cultural studies by some researchers as "a science of human survival, in which the environment is absorbed..." (Koren, 2013).

In this context, the conducted analysis of two main approaches to cultural studies, humanitarian and socio-scientific (socio- and cultural-anthropological), shows that the widespread stereotype of the inevitable alternativity of these approaches is far-fetched. Each of them captures certain features of the survival of humanity depending on the focus on the signs of human existence that are relevant but not exhaustive in fully in relation to the essence of the phenomenon of a person as a social and cultural entity (Kamenetz, 2015; Selezneva, 2017; Shcherbakova et al., 2016; Scherbakova et al., 2016).

Philosophy as a methodological basis of the humanitarian approach initially distinguishes in culture its spiritual and ideological core, which defines all existing cultural forms and phenomena. The socio-scientific approach, based on the biological picture of the world establishes the appropriate physical content of the relevant cultural processes and phenomena. Thus, if the humanitarian approach appeals to the mental, spiritual structures of a person and the corresponding interpretations of the main content of culture, the socio-scientific approach appeals to the corporeality of a person and the corresponding strategies of studying culture as a condition of one's physical survival. The combination of these approaches provides a holistic and adequate view of culture and its main subject as a biosocial being.

If one still appeals to the spiritual aspects of human existence and proceeds from the fact that cultural science is a humanitarian science, then the humanitarian approach should be decisive in relation to the socio-scientific, setting the latter initial goals and the corresponding intentionality.

5. Conclusions

The further rapprochement of the humanitarian and socio-scientific approaches to the study of culture with the defining role of the first one allows the authors to positively solve the known problem of correlation of tradition and innovation in the cultural development of societies and civilizations. The humanitarian approach is more related to the study of the traditional component of culture, and socio-scientific – of the innovative one. On the scale of cultural and historical time, it is, respectively, the movement from the past to the present (humanitarian approach) and the movement from the present to the "required future" (socio-scientific approach). The combination of these two approaches in the study of culture restores the connection of times with the defining role of cultural heritage (tradition) as the foundation for the cultural progress of society. If innovations are introduced in isolation from traditions, then there is an imitation of novelty with unpredictable consequences for the very existence of mankind.

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