

THE STRENGTHENING OF SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF CULTURE AND ART IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING A NEW SPIRITUAL SPACE

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Abstract

This article analyzes the role and significance of culture in social life in the context of globalization. It examines the essence of culture, its material and spiritual dimensions, and its role in the development of society. The main functions of culture – such as adaptive, cognitive, communicative, and socializing – are discussed. The importance of preserving national cultural heritage and developing spiritual values in the era of globalization is emphasized.

Keywords

Globalization, culture, spirituality, cultural heritage, social functions, cultural transformation, mass culture, socialization, communicative function, spiritual development.

Globalization possesses certain positive and negative characteristics. Its positive aspects consist in the fact that it accelerates the convergence of peoples, states, national economies, and national cultures, and creates broad opportunities for their development. Its negative side, however, is manifested in the fact that nations and ethnic groups lagging behind in development are unable to compete with the cultures, languages, and technologies of other nations, and as a result are spontaneously marginalized from active socio-economic life. As a consequence of globalization, one can observe clashes of existing civilizations in social life and cultural processes, as well as distinctive advances in attitudes toward values.

In the book “New Uzbekistan Development Strategy” by President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, the objectives, content, and priority directions of the fundamental changes and reforms being implemented in the country to lay the foundations of the Third Renaissance are defined. It is stated: “In the future, the priority tasks we need to accomplish in this area require the development and practical implementation of Uzbekistan’s spiritual development strategy and its program of action as an integral part of state policy. This important task, in turn, requires additional measures to further enhance the effectiveness of science, culture and art, literature and artistic creation in spiritual and educational

development”¹. It is evident, therefore, that culture and art occupy a special place in the implementation of the priority tasks defined for our country. Culture is a social phenomenon that emerged alongside society.

Culture and society are non-biological collective forms of human social activity and cannot exist without one another. In addition to the strong connection between them, certain differences also exist. From an activity-based perspective, society appears as the collective subject of activity, while culture manifests as the means, methods, and result of society’s influence.

Because culture performs important social functions, attempts to define its place and role in society have always existed. However, in contemporary cultural theory and the science of cultural studies, no universally accepted definition of culture has yet been established. Based on various theories developed by scholars on the subject of culture, the following designations can be noted: “Culture is all the material and spiritual wealth created by humanity; the artificial, ‘second’ nature of the human being; a generalized complex of human activity; creative activity; the spiritual condition of society; the quality of society; the quality of the individual, and others”². The various designations of culture encompass its aspects related to human activity, society, and spiritual and material dimensions. Culture plays an important role in integrating individuals into society, in the formation of spiritual values, and in directing social development. Therefore, every branch of culture serves to develop society and elevate the spiritual and moral level of the individual.

As we have noted above, the multiplicity of definitions given to the concept of culture is related to the fact that this phenomenon is an extremely complex social phenomenon.

In one of these definitions, culture is described as “a programmatic system of human activity and relations, historically developed and superior to biological processes, which serves as a condition for the transformation and reformation of all fundamental aspects of social life”³. Meanwhile, in the textbook “Theory of Culture” by A.Mavrulov and M.Mavrulova, culture is defined as “a social phenomenon that regulates the creative activity of the individual, gives meaning to the spiritual growth, intellectual and mental life of the person, and helps harmonize the individual’s goals with the social orientation of society”⁴. It is evident that the phenomenon of culture has been forming through the analyses and debates of scholars and specialists in the field over long periods. Based on the analysis and

¹ Mirziyoyev Sh. The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Uzbekistan Publishing House, 2021. 263 p.

² Mavrulov A., Mavrulova M. Theory of Culture. Study Guide. Tashkent: Donishmand Ziyoye Publishing House, 2023. 352 p., p. 11.

³ Mozheyko M. Culture. The Newest Philosophical Dictionary. 3rd ed. Moscow: Kniginy Dom, 2003. 1280 p., p. 18.

⁴ Mavrulov A., Mavrulova M. Theory of Culture. Study Guide. Tashkent: Donishmand Ziyoye Publishing House, 2023. 352 p., p. 31.

synthesis of the many definitions and views on culture, we propose the following definition: Culture is a social phenomenon based on conscious, creative, and continuous activity related to the creation, preservation, improvement, and transmission of material and spiritual wealth to future generations.

The division of culture into material and spiritual culture is a relative distinction; in reality, they develop in interconnection, mutual influence, and mutual conditionality. Because culture is a multifaceted and wide-ranging phenomenon, its social functions are renewed and enriched with the passage of time. Since culture is a social phenomenon that firmly binds individuals and separate persons to other persons, society, and its various socio-cultural institutions, it must fulfill the functions necessary to carry out its responsibilities before the individual and society.

The adaptive, cognitive, informational, communicative, regulatory, evaluative, and socializing functions of culture have been highlighted by many scholars as the most fundamental⁵.

1. Adaptive Function.

Culture ensures the adaptation of the human being to the surrounding environment, and this concept of adaptation is also expressed in the term "adaptation". The adaptation of the animal and plant worlds occurs in the process of biological evolution. Human adaptation to the environment, however, takes place through the creation of an artificial environment around oneself. As a biological species, the human being undergoes changes in various conditions, while culture (in the form of economic practices, customs, and social institutions) undergoes changes adapted to natural conditions in specific territories. A large portion of the traditions characteristic of culture has a rational basis consistent with beneficial adaptive efficiency. The adaptive function of culture is also manifested in the fact that its development creates all-round convenience for people, increases labor productivity, and opens new opportunities for the individual's spiritual self-expression.

2. Cognitive Function.

The cognitive function of culture is manifested primarily in creating opportunities for the individual to acquire new knowledge about the world. This function is performed by various forms of spiritual culture such as mythology, science, religion, philosophy, and art. In particular, the role of science and art in cognition is manifested in the fact that scientific and artistic cognition possess distinctive features that mutually enrich one another.

⁵ Mavrulov A., Mavrulova M. Theory of Culture. Study Guide. Tashkent: Donishmand Ziyoyat Publishing House, 2023. 352 p., p. 39.

Science develops by studying the essence and laws of development through the examination of commonality and necessity in phenomena and processes. While everyday knowledge is limited to the classification of facts, scientific knowledge strives to predict the further development of phenomena and processes by explaining them. Thus, the main purpose of scientific cognition is explanation and scientific prediction. Scientific knowledge is generalized, according to its form, in general concepts, categories, laws, and theories. Artistic cognition, unlike scientific cognition, is characterized by visual and figurative features. One might say that science is thought expressed in concepts.

No other form of social consciousness can fulfill the role that art occupies in the spiritual world and psychology of humanity. Art is a form of social consciousness that reflects reality through artistic images, and unlike scientific concepts and laws, the artistic image also reflects the objective world, the emotional state, and the evaluative attitude toward the world. Thus, art, as a form of social consciousness, not only reflects objective reality through artistic images but also possesses the quality of producing a reciprocal influence upon it. Art is considered an important means of knowing the world and of the individual's self-knowledge; through aesthetic ideals it influences people and enables them to assimilate generalized, thought-enriched experience. The function of art in shaping an aesthetic worldview and thereby fostering the individual's creativity according to the laws of beauty and creating aesthetic values is particularly important.

In general, the social and aesthetic function of art is broad and diverse: it is a source of enjoyment for the human being, a bestower of beauty, a shaper of emotional attitudes toward reality, an aid in transforming life in the direction desired by the individual, a caller to loathing of ugliness, a fulfiller of the function of a spiritual bridge, and a satisfier of aesthetic needs. At the center of works of art stand people, their social connections, mutual relationships, and their lives and activities in specific historical circumstances. The educational knowledge acquired through works of art differs from the knowledge obtained through scientific works; the experiences and images expressed in them serve to take root in the heart of each reader and viewer, and to arouse aesthetic pleasure.

3. Function of Transmitting Social Experience.

Another important function of culture is the transmission of social experience. The transmission of social experience from generation to generation, from era to era, and from one place to another is accomplished through culture. Society possesses no other means or mechanism, apart from culture, to make people beneficiaries of the rich experience created by humanity. Culture consists of a complex system of signs and preserves the social experience of generations across

centuries – in concepts and words, in scientific formulas, in the unique language of art, in tools of labor, in customs and traditions. Distancing from cultural heritage leads to enormous negative consequences through the loss of social memory by the new generation. The elimination of the Jadidism movement, for example, led to great negative consequences. That is why Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, one of the prominent representatives of the Jadidist movement, stated in his article “The Word ‘Sart’ Is Unknown” published in the journal “Oyna” in 1915: “Those who do not know the name of their tribe and their seven forefathers are called ‘slaves’”⁶.

Chingiz Aitmatov, in turn, calls those deprived of memory “mankurts”⁷. Thus, culture helps humanity preserve its own past and historical roots, thereby contributing to the strengthening of the social memory of humankind.

One might say that culture is the historical memory of humanity. Culture is a vast treasury of the inexhaustible knowledge and values created and accumulated by humanity. Accordingly, it is necessary to adhere to the principle of preserving, enriching, and transmitting to future generations all the material and spiritual wealth created by humanity with regard to culture. Each generation uses these riches, preserves them, further enriches them, and bequeaths them to the next generation.

4. Communicative Function.

The communicative function of culture is manifested in its creating conditions and serving as a means for establishing interpersonal communication. Because culture is created collectively by people, it is considered both a condition and a result of communication among them. Its role as a condition is manifested in the fact that only through the assimilation of culture are the forms of human interpersonal communication established, and communication means are provided through language and systems of signs. Its role as a result is that only through communication can people create, preserve, and develop culture. Through communication, people express their thoughts using systems of signs and acquire the ability to understand the thoughts of others. Therefore, culture connects and unites people with one another.

5. Regulatory Function.

The regulatory function of culture is manifested primarily in defining the regulation of various aspects of the social and personal activity of individuals. In labor, everyday life, and interpersonal relations, culture influences their behavior and regulates their activities to one degree or another. The regulatory function of culture is implemented through its components such as values, norms, and

⁶ Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudi. Selected Works. Tashkent: Ma’naviyat Publishing House, 1977. 232 p., p. 173.

⁷ Chingiz Aytmatov. The Day Lasts More Than a Century. Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 2006. 258 p., p. 176.

traditions. Some cultural scholars separately identify the heuristic function of culture, since scientific and mechanical management are connected with figurative thinking, imagination, and a certain emotional state.

6. Recreational Function.

This function helps people restore their expended physical and spiritual energy during leisure time away from work. Through tourism, creative activities, holidays, and various cultural and spiritual events, the individual fills the spatially and temporally limited void in life, and broadens the circle of communication.

7. Socializing Function.

The socializing function of culture is manifested in its being a means by which individuals enter social life and assimilate the values, social status, knowledge, and behavioral norms characteristic of a particular society or social group. The process of socialization gives the individual the opportunity to become a full member of society and to live within it in accordance with customs and traditions based on a particular perspective. At the same time, this process ensures the preservation of society, its system, and its forms of life. Culture defines the content, means, and methods of socialization. In the process of socialization, people assimilate the behavioral norms existing in culture, think accordingly, and engage in activity.

Today, in the course of performing these social functions, certain transformations (changes) are occurring in cultural development. These changes, while offering unlimited opportunities to the entire world in the economic, social, and information spheres, are simultaneously giving rise to global problems. Globalization is one of the main trends in world development; it represents the extreme socialization of economic, political, and cultural relations, the wide spread of the latest information technologies and information in general on a world scale, and the emergence of standardization and common patterns in international consumption of material and spiritual goods in everyday life.

In the context of today's global changes, threats to the spiritual foundations of social life are intensifying. The spread of harmful ideas such as depravity and violence under the guise of "mass culture" is having a negative impact on national traditions and values. Therefore, in the conditions of globalization, preserving the national cultural and spiritual heritage, developing art and artistic creation, strengthening the activities of cultural institutions, and promoting national culture on an international scale are of great importance.

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