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“SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS” AS A PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPT DEAMNED BY THE TIMES

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ABSTRACT

Significant changes caused by migration processes taking place today in the European part of the world not only encourage political, administrative and legal tools to resolve them, but also create a new categorical apparatus and philosophical concepts which contribute to the formation of a new world, an adequate for the period of global crisis. This is true in the perspective that previously humanitarian discourse was focused on the describing stable situations in the culture and the society, but the periods of “breaking” of traditional stereotypes and the emergence of a situation of instability are still not well understood. For better understanding of such bifurcations there were used different concepts: “crisis”, “era of transition”, “cyclical dynamics”, “progress”, “return motion”, “upward and downward waves”, “modernization” and many others. All of them contain different connotations and include the vector characteristics. Unlike the above mentioned concepts, we believe, the phenomenon “transformation” is more adequate for ongoing changes because it does not include an evaluation component, and thus it is more succinct. The understanding of the fundamental causes of socio-cultural transformations related to the specific historical period is necessary as a basis for the analysis of the cultural genesis. In a period of relative stability of empires and civilizations, the transformations were not so vivid and significant, their scopes were quite narrow and local, sometimes even manageable. However, during the collapse of empires and civilizations or so called the modern world-system transformations reach the global level as they affect different areas: economy, politics, religion, law, culture, carrying out on a personal and/or public levels. This comprehensive scope of their manifestations requires philosophical understanding of this concept.

Keywords: socio-cultural transformations, era of transition, philosophy of culture, humanitarian discourse

The significant changes being caused by the processes of migration, economic crises, military conflicts, the change of political regimes, and sharp social stratification taking place in the today's world prompt political, administrative and legal methods of solving them. In this context it becomes extremely relevant to look for philosophical concepts that contribute to understanding what is happening. In his time, Gilles Deleuze, pondering the nature of philosophy, invariably replied as follows: “philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, producing concepts” [1]. Treating philosophy in such a way, he refers to Friedrich Nietzsche, but greatly expands upon this idea, explaining that every

concept has its age, its history, and that therefore every concept is subject to the requirements of renovation or replacement. As Deleuze explains, a concept is not received knowledge, but creatively constructed; a concept is an outline, a configuration, a constellation of some future event, but since every concept undergoes a period of formation, it must be considered in relation to other concepts.

Taking as a starting point this vision of the concept as a reconstructed philosophical reality, let us analyze some of the concepts developed in western culture. Western humanitarian discourse of the recent past has mostly been focused on describing stable states in culture and society (though there have been no balanced and stationary states in history, and such complex systems as culture and society are constantly in a state of flux). There have been different concepts in use: evolution, forward motion, linear development, progress, modernization and post-modernization, dynamics. Cultural development has been understood as a cumulative process that has contributed to the implementation of all components of the state: politics, economy, and a variety of social institutions. The rapid accumulation of knowledge and the fast-growing development of science and technology – all of this has become a basis and support for the concept of the progressive development of humanity, for its liberation on a global scale. However, the development of “technoscience” has laid bare the obvious incompatibility of conceptual constructions and historical realities. The negative consequences of the implementation of the modernity project include the unrestrained complexity of the world, deepening social inequality, violence committed in the form of incessant wars, competition, striving for the attainment/preservation of the local (national, ethnic, religious identity) as a response to the threat of the leveling force of Western universalism, etc. According to Jean-François Lyotard, humanity is divided into two parts: one is faced with the challenge of complexity, the other – with the challenge of survival, and it is in this, according to his hypothesis, that the chief cause of the failure of the modernity project can be found [2]. The emerging new situation in culture, which can be described as ‘the postmodern’, has necessitated the formation of a conceptual apparatus and conceptual constructions that respond to these changing realities.

The debunking of the concept of Western universalism and its related idea of progress has demanded new concepts: the cycle, the rise and fall, the upward and downward wave, cyclical dynamics, the return movement, repetition, pluralism, etc. A weighty study of related terminology and methodologies of the study of nonlinear periods of development was made by Russian economist Nikolai Kondratiev. Certain elements of his theory were later claimed by Fernand Braudel. Immanuel Wallerstein and many other Western thinkers to explain the history of world development as determined by economic characteristics. In their works we can find valuable judgments to the effect that cultural maps do not match economic ones, that the concept of linear dimensions of culture is redundant, and that nonlinear measurements are now the order of the day. Comparing the degree of development of economy and culture allows us to note the following: during times of economic recession culture behaves extremely strangely; it (as does the state) actively interferes with life during long downturns. Sometimes culture manages to achieve what society cannot. This can be explained from the perspective that one of the callings of culture, according to Fernand Braudel, is “to plug” gaps and voids in the social plurality, which he understands as a kind of system that in addition to culture also includes economy, politics and social hierarchy [3]. We can supplement Braudel's thoughts by noting that non-systemic and cultural movements also occur, the result of

which is formations that do not fit into the system and which differ radically from the existing institutions contained in it. However, Braudel himself mentions the accidents, violations and distortions that may mark the beginning of a collapse of the system. History testifies to the variety of bizarre trajectories in the development of culture, when during economic downturns culture reached extraordinary levels and positive results. This was linked to the realization of a common idea brought about by the social masses insofar as culture was an element of a system, either performing within it an according function or, on the contrary, disengaging itself from it.

Analyzing the periods of surges and declines in culture and educating the various forms and models of cultural development, Alfred Kroeber noted their extreme fragility, pointing out that it is not clear exactly which factor contributes to their evolution. Perhaps, he suggested, this is something that lies in the very constitution of the human soul. Describing the variety of models (forms) of separate cultures, he noted that he could see no signs of any kind of law – in the true sense – governing their development or decline – nothing cyclical, regularly recurring or essential [4]. These cultural forms (models) from his point of view include philosophy, science, and art in all its diversity of forms and genres. He analyzed them in the context of their association with the nation-state, which in today's terminology we would describe as their relation to geoculture. Hence the diversity of national models, or cultural forms. In analyzing this issue, he used the following concept when characterizing the formation of models: the high-quality model, the potential possibilities of a model, the waves of development of the model, the decline of the growth of the model, a temporary lull, the dying of the model, the weak reoccurrences of the model, the end of the model, new models, etc. All of the above-listed concepts feature vector characteristics and an evaluative moment. At the same time Alfred Kroeber has no answer to the question of what causes (internal or external) are responsible for models changing, he only writes about the variety of cultural forms, about their appearance, growth and cultural death, or even about their displacement by other cultural forms, i.e. about that which serves as the title of the abovementioned book: the configuration of cultural forms.

Kroeber's precursor in addressing this issue was German philosopher Georg Simmel, who saw culture as many forms: social order, works of art, religion, scientific knowledge, civil laws and much more. As a representative of the philosophy of antipositivism, Simmel proceeded from the fact that life cannot manifest itself in the creation of forms of culture, but after a certain time the forms in which life has been formed begin to prevent its expression, and are therefore inevitably destroyed in order to allow life to express itself. By expressing itself, life re-creates other cultural forms, and again thereby limits its expression, and so on *ad infinitum*. Simmel expounded this theme in line with the Hegelian philosophy, positing that all forms are created from life itself, that the spirit creates something independent and objective. His principal idea, which always finds its confirmation in social reality, consists in the recognition of the inevitable conflict between life, flowing forward and spreading its energy wider and wider, and the frozen historical forms of its expression [5]. If we expand the concept of life as a source of creative forms for its incarnation (according to Simmel), but treat life as a changing reality by virtue of a set of visible or hidden causes, then Simmel's idea about the inevitability of conflict, which runs through the entire history of culture, is of extraordinary importance in the current period. For it is the present that has laid so

strikingly bare the conflict between established traditional cultural forms and new social realities which have arisen as a consequence of globalization and geopolitical processes

Furthermore, it became quite obvious that the focus should be on the body of changes in close relation to the link between culture and society. This fact found its justification in the works of Pitirim Sorokin, who as part of his theory of the dynamics of culture, which manifest themselves in the supplanting of some fundamental cultural forms with others, justified the validity of the term "socio-cultural change." This idea is embodied by Sorokin in his fundamental work *Society, Culture and Personality: Their Structure and Dynamics* (1947), in which he explained that the individual, society and culture together form an inseparable triad [6].

Many of Sorokin's thoughts can be interpreted by following a synergistic approach. A transitional period or crisis in culture, characterized by a situation of instability, a break in traditional stereotypes, the leveling of common values and ideals, and disorder or chaos, can be called "a particular point" or "a bifurcation point." In this situation it is fundamentally impossible to predict in which direction further development will occur: whether the system will become chaotic or whether it will move to a new, more differentiated and higher level of order. This uncertainty and the components of probability in the transformation of culture were highlighted by Pitirim Sorokin, as well as being substantiated by numerous scholars in synergy, synergy.

According to Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers the term "transformation" expresses the transition to a qualitatively new way of organizing society, which is effectuated as a result of the growth of the specific gravity of non-balanced and non-linear relationships with their environment [7]. Only in a non-balanced system can there be a place for unique events and the fluctuations that contribute to these events. Furthermore, an expansion of the scale of the system takes place, as well as an increase in its sensitivity to the external world, and finally a historical perspective, i.e. the possibility of the appearance of other, perhaps better, forms of organization. It is precisely this state of the system that is the source of the formation of new cultural forms. In this case unbalance, understood to be the source of matter or energy, can in fact be a source of order. Prigogine noted that there are truly startling examples of facts that were not taken into account because the cultural climate was not prepared to include them in a self-consistent scheme. But the changes taking place in the political and governmental systems, economic changes, and the shift in the spiritual and cultural landmarks in society – the key indicators of social development – are all consequences of transformation processes. In addition, we are witnessing the emergence of a new, more global vision when it comes to the understanding of science and knowledge, a vision that responds not only to the cultural traditions of Western civilization but includes different points of view. The processes of transculturation, hybridization, and creolization are not only evidence of a transitional period, but also prompt the appraisal of the situation as a crisis in culture.

The altered paradigm for viewing the development of humanity and culture testifies to the fact that while some of the processes in nature, society and culture can – with our existing levels of knowledge – be described using deterministic equations, others require the application of probabilistic considerations. In this case we are talking about a new alliance of the arts and sciences. Together with the recognition of the multiplicity of our universe and the complexity of the world, the probabilistic element has become a necessary component in explaining the evolution of culture. Minor

transformations can cause significant changes in macrosystems and can facilitate the formation of unique and specific cultural forms. In this context it becomes urgent to form a new vision, with the inevitability of accepting radical change in culture, sometimes deprived of clear argumentation and causal determination. The formation of a new culture is necessary, one that has arisen through the transformation of the old cultural forms.

The modern age is more and more often characterized as a period of crisis, as a situation of uncertainty, as an era of transition. Justification of this can be found in the works of the authors already mentioned, as well as in the description of the evolution of the contemporary "world-system" by Immanuel Wallerstein. In his opinion, this world-system, which has existed for more than five centuries, is coming to an end, and the contours of the future one remain unclear. The coming world-system might be better, but it could be worse, writes Wallerstein [8]. But it is not so important to look for confirmation of the changes occurring in the world in established theories, since they only reflect what is taking place – however the catastrophic changes are obvious, and are snowballing by the day and by the minute.

The historical formation of the concept of transformation briefly presented in this paper shows us that during periods of relative stability of empires and civilizations sociocultural transformations are inconspicuous, quite local and often manageable, but during the period of the collapse of empires and civilizations or the contemporary world-system they reach a global level covering different spheres: economics, politics, religion, law, culture; they also take place on a personal and / or social levels.

There are specific causes for socio-cultural transformations in each distinct historical period, and analyzing them is essential since it clarifies the essence of the evolution of culture. The distinguishing feature of this term in the relation to the previously used terms describing the evolution of culture is the lack of an evaluative component and vector characteristics, which is perhaps why it has turned out to be more succinct in comparison with those used earlier: "innovative development," "catch-up modernization," "rapid development," etc. The term has various uses, and socio-cultural transformation has been the subject of study in the field of religious awareness, education, the housing code, healthcare, methods of identity, cultural practices, communication strategies and so on. An important characteristic of any concept is plurality, the confirmation of which is the all-embracing range of transformations in the contemporary world.

So, then, the most productive methodological facility for the analysis of the transformations during a crisis period in a society is a socio-cultural approach. According to this approach, society is understood as a union of culture and sociality, formed and transformed by the activity of man. The socio-cultural transformation can here be understood as the transfiguration of an anthropo-societal interrelationship or its concrete historical form. The distinguishing feature of this anthropo-societal approach is that it considers the acting/interacting of individuals in a clear relationship with a socio-cultural (societal) system, insofar as it is they [individuals] who create it, providing its continuous reproduction and change. In an anthropo-societal approach, society is understood as a flexible system that exists thanks to the interaction of people and is capable of changing in response to threats or risks.

At the end of the 20th century, changes in Russia occurred with such intensity that a crisis became apparent. Russia had once again entered a period of rapid change. The

comprehensive crisis affecting Soviet, and with it Russian society, became obvious in the late 80s it grew like an avalanche, and by 1991 there was not a single sphere of social life that was not affected by it. It was a social and cultural crisis because it included social relationships, and culture, and their interaction. Reflecting on these processes. Russian scholars have developed the concept of the "transformation" of Russian society. Let us define Russian researchers understand "transformation" firstly as a radical and relatively rapid change in the social nature of society [9], secondly, as the transformation of a society distinguished by its national and cultural originality [10], thirdly, as a rapid, external superficial change in society facilitated by the introduction of foreign elements into it and accompanied by growing negative phenomena (N.I. Ikonnikova), and finally as a complex, mainly evolutionary transformation of society as a socio-cultural system – a "socio-cultural transformation" (N.I. Lapin), etc. Let us explore the views of the latter.

The Russian scholar Nikolai Lapin suggested distinguishing between two types of social and cultural transformations, which are *traditionalization* (the emergence and institutionalization of traditions and other elements of culture and social structures that provide the priority of prescribed norms and rules of behavior of subjects (traditional actions)) or *liberalization* (the expansion of freedom of choice and the responsibility of subjects, increased opportunities for innovative goal-driven actions by differentiating the structure of society, and the emergence and inclusion of new integrating elements) [11].

At the beginning of the 21st century, Russian society dealt with a socio-cultural transformation that took the shape of a shift from the traditionalist type of anthropo-societal interrelationship to a liberal or modern one (moving forward to a balance between the individual and the society). However, the transformations in various spheres of culture and society are not taking place evenly. In addition, geopolitical events and the reaction to them in all aspects of culture, society and individual awareness have radically affected the direction of change in culture and society and have led to a shift towards a path of social and cultural transformations: back to traditionalization. Any of the selected paths is not the high road, but a struggle between oppositely directed trends. Liberalization opposes traditionalization. And several generations will have to follow the chosen path before it will be acceptable for life. However, the selection of path must inevitably be related to the common high road being followed by humanity, if this can be traced. Then it will be clear if Russia should go along with the others or move against the tide, in the opposite direction. The main difference between the transformations taking place in Russia and those in the West are that in Russia they are not stable: they are close to a state of "dynamic chaos."

To conclude we believe that these terms and forming concepts not only seek to catch the semantic characteristics of the phenomena occurring but by the very fact of their existence permit a certain angle of vision, are involved in the formation of worldviews. inspire certainty, or on the contrary, plunge us into the unknown in their inability to give an adequate evaluation to events. This also applies to the concept of "socio-cultural transformation" widely demanded in the analysis of the changes occurring in the world, which indicates that we are living in an era of acute social challenges, uncertainty and responsibility for the decisions being taken.

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