

СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ НАУКИ

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RELIGIOUS FACTOR AMID CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Abstract. The article offers a variety of views on religious studies and theological approach amid cultural development against the background of the interrelationship between different humanitarian subjects. It highlights the issues of religious philosophy and ethnic values based on creative approach, in comparing the ethics in the writings and art belonging to different scholars.

Аннотация. Статья предлагает для рассмотрения взгляды на изучение религии и теологического аспекта в тесной связи с культурным развитием на фоне рассмотрения взаимосвязи между гуманитарными предметами. Статья освещает вопросы религиозной философии и этнических ценностей в рамках этики письменности и искусства, представленных в работах различных ученых.

Key words: *Cultural heritage, religion, theological approach, ethnical values, immigration, languages studies, academic discipline, creativity, art, ethics.*

Ключевые слова: *Культурное наследие, религия, теологический аспект, этнические ценности, иммиграция, изучение языков, академическая дисциплина, креативность, живопись, этика.*

Studies in the fields of religion and culture have long been the topical issues on the world agenda. If, in some cases, national identity is found to be overlapping with religious aspects, cultural diversities are placed, at the same time, intermingled with the issues of confessional belonging. Generally speaking, we cannot deny the fact that religion is inseparable from culture in the same way as culture is intertwined with history. Under the conditions of a new reality, however, in this age of global transformations, we witness a sort of shift in the religious mentality and versatile approach to religions. In the turbulent conditions of the present day phenomenon sharp divisions in societies and migration issues, alongside with social issues, remain to be unsolved. For someone the education of children and grown-ups seems to be of the healing nature and offers some wishful help, but not in all cases it would become a remedy to cure peoples' negligence and misconduct. The versatile program for studying languages, cultural heritage and fundamentals of religious aspect is still far from being mastered.

If we follow closely the debates on ethnical issues within social circles we cannot ignore the fact that people at large come to understand another language within the environment they happened to be by listening, by watching the movement of lips, of gestures, behavior, the whole complex of the surrounding milieu. So, if a language is closely connected with a certain culture, it is in the same way connected with the religion. There is a variety of views as to what religion is and to what is Church, and quite justifiably we can cite the observation made by the Bishop Kallistos Ware, a teacher at the University of Oxford. He wrote: "According to the Orthodox understanding, it is primarily a liturgical community, which expresses its true self through invocation and doxology. Worship comes first, doctrine and discipline second... I encountered the Orthodox Church not as a theory or an ideology, but a concrete and specific fact, as a worshiping presence" [*The Inner Kingdom*. The selected works. Volume I. St. Vladimir Seminary Press,

New York, 2001]. For some laymen it would be a very primitive way to explain that theology is taught as an academic discipline and that it begins with assumption that the Divine exists in some form. While the *Religious studies* course, taught at some colleges, with its educational objectives and ideologically neutral approach seems to be quite a typical educational discipline, *Theology* as a discipline is much more spiritually motivated and requires scrupulous and sentimental probe into the annals of its deep and mysterious essence of the human being. Theological aspect would seem rather a very limited study of religion for those who are not very certain about their way of believing, but in the same cases it could become a guiding star for are plunged in the darkness of cultural ignorance.

Religion, as many people think, leads its pupils to a vague and very general understanding of issues closely connected with religious dogma. Few people, however, would connect the general view on religion studies with a wide range of disciplines, which are well understood or seem to be comprehensible. We cannot avoid thinking, or address the problem, to the understanding, among other things, how theology could create culture or what is the influence of culture on theology or rather theology on culture. Layers of cultural civilization are undoubtedly intertwined with the Christian world, if we speak about Christianity as one of the main religions. The Christian transcendent nature sets the basics for the romantic art, for example, in its strive for non-ending heavenly elevated beauty, which does not belong to the earth only, and thirst for unprecedented desirable imaginable world. The classical art, heritage of Roman empire and Greece, will indicate to a strict grandiose monumental power. According to Nikolai Berdyaev, the Russian philosopher, the pagan art was striving to create the whole completeness of beauty here on earth, while Christian art is very spiritually motivated. For Berdyaev religion and religious philosophy were the meaning of all his creative life.

While people involved in religious studies tend to describe the issue of culture from their theological views, for scholars *culture* means the world, its structure, its people and their active deeds in all their complexity. In the 18-th century Schleiermacher coined an argument in favor of cultural necessity of the religion. In the view of some philosophical writers theology was changed by the culture, or rather adapted to the culture, at the same time a theory exists that theology creates culture. In this case we can speak about some sub-cultures that exist within a large all-embracing cultural milieu.

If we compare different views on the role of culture and its penetration into religion, we can hardly draw a clear-cut line, saying definitely where and how one thing depends on the other. The anthropological view on culture can be understood as a complex, according to Edward Tylor, embracing belief, knowledge, art, morals, law, customs. In his *Religion in Primitive Culture* Tylor insists on capabilities of man acquired by him depending on his belonging to a society. In his writings about the evolution of religion Tylor interprets the animism as the true natural religion and the foundation of all religions. We can, of course, call religion or in the same way theology, as being mystical, or in some works as divine mystery, and mystery is taken as something beyond the understanding. Even more so, in the Eastern Christian theology, the distinction between the mysticism and theology is rather insignificant. But as mystical experience can be understood as a personal inner feeling of the common belief, theology is the common feature that lies in the Church teaching.

Some anthropologists, describing the ideas of cultural penetration in theology as immature, assessed the phenomenon as having the lack of understanding. Wilhelm von Humboldt, the great linguist and philosopher, put forward the idea of each ethnic group having a distant world view which cannot be compared with the world views of other groups. His approach to culture at a later period of his life, meant the distinctions between the civilized and primitive or tribal cultures. These ideas stimulated the understanding of culture as culture associated with different activities. In another example, in Franz Boas views, culture was associated with some ideal of an elite, connected with higher culture, such as art, classical music and low culture, sometimes folklore and etc. What Franz Boas tried to show, was a different relationship between culture and man. Meanwhile some scholars associated high culture with the ruling establishment, and some with the state of nature.

The psychological approach which Boas attempted to apply to culture and man interaction was considered an alienation from Tylor's rationalism and the English school. Edward Tylor developed the ideas of higher and low cultures in his theory of the evolution of religion. Tylor described culture as a diverse pattern of various activities inherent in different societies. Religion at the same time develops from polytheistic to monotheistic status. And from these thinking some theories appeared as classifying some countries as more civilized than others.

Franz Boas attempts to approach the issue of man and culture in his own way, and if Tylor treated beliefs,

customs and culture proper in a rational way and assesses them as the products of the human mind, Franz Boas makes a controversial conclusion: cultures are the culmination of different behavioral environment, different development of historical processes, different milieu in which human feelings were structured and ideas were shaped.

In Durkheim teaching, a religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, in other words he writes about beliefs and practices which form moral community called Church. Durkheim centers his ideas on the sacred, which he thinks is the core of religion. In his view, moral forces are made up of ideas or sentiments that spring up in a society. Durkheim thinks of religion as a fundamental social institution, being the strongest sense of collective consciousness.

The idea of social function expanded in different ways, and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, under the influence of Durkheim, argued that the goal of the anthropological studies was the search for collective function, such as, for one, interconnection of religious creed and social order. Deep rooted in this idea was the theory that civilization developed from the primitive form to the modern one everywhere on the planet in the same way. So, where is culture and where is religion?

As *culture*, as a term, according to some scholars introduced by Tylor, was associated with the everything that was done by man within an environment, it could be understood as social heritage. Thus, naturally, it had to include in itself folklore as a linguistic necessity. Franz Boas, brought the interest in the folk culture that was linked with the folk psychology movement, introduced by Wilhelm Wundt, which we feel in Franz Boas' works. Research and findings in comparative psychology focusing on a language, myth and way of life, inspired Boas to study the interconnection of a language and religious mythology. As far as Wilhelm Wundt is concerned, in his writing *Ethic* on cultural psychology, he emphasized that the entire human history must be understood as important development considerations with due attention to religion, customs and morality.

For many years Boas has been trying to keep folklore as part of anthropology, consequently with ethnology. He has made great attempts to involve his enthusiastic pupils to join his field of studies and accept his methods. His used highly disciplined scientific methodology, focusing on comprehensive research and fieldwork. If we try and find direct links of anthropology, or archeology with folklore, we will probably find none. But the information obtained in the course of research would facilitate the search in finding facts of the population displacement and routs of travelling which could become of unmeasurable value for the folklore researcher. Boas investigated dissemination of different folk groups, thus making the attempts to prove that, the similarities in their folklore testify that they belong to the same culture. He categorized different parts of their folklore in his "catch-word" method, which allowed him to conclude that there were similar tales in different groups. Boas asserted that not all the cultures developed in the same way, but he was very cautious by saying that non-

European cultures were not the same as many, but different.

The great Russian scientist and theologian Pavel Florensky, awarded with a scholarship in folklore, displayed quite a big interest in folklore and art. The most amazing thing about him was that he was also a mathematician, physicist, engineer, philosopher and priest, combining his religious views with in-depth research in art and culture in general. He concentrated his mind, among other things, on icon painting in the Russian tradition, and that was described in one of his writings called *Iconostas*.

In his consideration of what is «word» Florensky writes that *a word* is a tool of cognition and contents of cognition is a certain artistic craftsmanship, that is the cognition itself in its activity and in its being. According to him, «thought» is visual and images harmonize with it. A thought is sensible and musical. It is musical because inner accompaniment accords it. He asserted that it was quite amazing to feel the verbal baroque in the theology of the XVII and especially of the XVIII centuries, in theologian writings and sermons. In the same way, he wrote, he felt the inner conformity of theology and icon painting, both in its contents and style. For Florensky it was especially remarkable to observe the metaphysics of light as it was the main feature of icon painting. In his lectures, delivered at St. Sergio's Larva, Pavel Florensky illuminated his ideas of, what he thought, was the art, presented in Church.

According to Florensky, secular historians and theologians-positivists ascribed the general conservatism existing in the Church, which is typical for it and which lies within the framework of the Church consciousness, to the fact, that the Church creative audacity had expired. He asserted that canon had never served as a hindrance, that canonic form releases the creative energy of an artist by elevating it to an unprecedented altitude, giving way to new achievements, creative flight. For Florensky, the demand for canonic form, or to express the idea in a more clear way, the gift of canonic form given to the artist by the humanity, means the release rather than constraint. He then dwells by saying, that an artist, due to his ignorance, may come to imaginable ideas that he would create something great without any canonic form. He will be like a passers-by, Florensky emphasizes, stubbornly asserting that solid ground prevents him from walking and that he would proceed more progressively if suspended in the air.

In view of the above we can hardly observe the intricate knitting as well as straight clear-cut line differentiating religion (or theology), culture and ethics that would come to the foreground with all their complexities. The obvious observation is that religion and culture are inseparable in the same way as culture and language are inseparable. In educational programs it would quite expedient to teach students languages, culture, ethics and provide them with studies of religions in a complex canvass of disciplines rather than differentiating them and addressing them to a number of universities' branches according to the occupation of students and field of application of their knowledge. In

the course of anthropological studies we witness a constant approach to religion studies, and the development of this or that tendencies could lead us to comparison and deeper understanding what meant religion in societies' histories. In our new reality comprehensive and in-depth approach would help us appreciate the development of human society. Different values, cultural approaches, linguistic phenomenon and geographical peculiarities must be very carefully applied, without forcing people to accept alien religion or culture automatically. Social benefits could probably be directed to improve the ethnic groups living conditions in their natural geographical conditions, giving them the chance to understand the values of another culture before they move to another country.

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