

*Contemporary Philosophy
Съвременна философия*

INFLUENCE OF MASS CULTURE ON ETHNIC CULTURE AND ITS OVERCOMING

Anzhelina Koriakina

North-Eastern Federal University (Russia)

Abstract. The intensification of world processes has acutely raised the problem of preserving traditional ethnic culture. Preservation of cultural heritage in a mass society is the most important problem of our time. In this regard, the question of influence of mass culture on the culture of an ethnos and its overcoming is actualized. In the article, on the basis of the literature review, the concepts of “mass culture” and “ethnic culture” are analyzed. It is revealed that ethnic culture is multi-component and includes both traditional components and elements of mass culture.

The consequences of the impact of mass culture on the culture of the Yakut ethnos- acculturation and marginalization – are revealed. Conditions for overcoming the influence of mass culture on the culture of an ethnos – the dialogue between western and eastern cultures, the cessation of mindless copying of the Western way of life – are developed.

Keywords: mass culture; ethnic culture; traditional culture; marginality; modernization

Introduction

The beginning of the second millennium is a key, turning point in the development of human history and culture. Profound fundamental changes have occurred in almost all spheres of human activity.

The intensification of world processes even more acutely posed the problem of translating traditional ethnic culture (Panfilova, 2017; Lipets, 2014). Preserving the cultural heritage, increasing the degree of its influence on the formation of the cultural foundation of modernity is the most important problem of modernity. The process of folding modern, mass society, the process of modernization, does not contribute to the actual preservation of traditional cultural ethnic heritage, but, on the contrary, may well cause humanity to lose its ethnic culture (Xu & Hamamura, 2014; Zeng & Greenfield, 2015).

In this paper, we seek to intensify attention to this problem and emphasize its exceptional importance and relevance.

Indeed, the development of human society at the present stage is undergoing a protracted transition from a traditional type of society to a modern society. This transition (modernization) is characterized by dramatic changes in personal and social order (Zambakari, 2018; Sun & Ryder, 2016). Traditional values are crumbling; the loss of traditions does not always lead to positive innovations (Linetsky, 2017; Gorokhov, 2015; Alampiev, 2018). There comes a general, “global”, universal order.

The paper examines the reasons and manifestations of this crisis, and determines how it can be overcome. All those processes that occur in the modern sociocultural space and which radically change the face of the modern world, the face of culture and man, require careful philosophical analysis in order to identify the essence of the modern, mass, stage of cultural development, determine its future prospects. This is the main basis for the relevance of this study, in which an attempt is made to present one’s view on the fate of the culture of a traditional society, ethnic culture, in the modern world, and on the problem of the correlation of the traditional (original) and the mass elements in it.

Literature review

The main aspect of the problem under investigation – mass culture – is evaluated contradictorily. Researchers present mass culture as a form of culture characteristic of an industrial society with a developed system of mass communication (Arefiev & Davydenkova, 2015). Sometimes mass culture is defined as a new phenomenon in the cultural space; the phenomenon of the information society, its integration and potential (Borovikova, 2016; Ermishina, 2015; Kozharinova, 2014). This phenomenon is understandable and accessible to each individual and is characterized by simplicity of images, orientation to entertainment (Shitova, 2015). In the most simplified interpretations, mass culture is a dominant culture, a cultural industry (Norman, 2017), a means of socializing an individual, adapting to life in the modern world (Khizhnyachenko, 2016).

Researchers study the methodology and history of mass culture (Zlotnikova & Kiyaschenko, 2015; Shapinskaya, 2017), presenting it in an ambiguous manner, often as a pseudo-culture, a simplified and stereotypical system of ideas about it (Sheverdin, 2014; Tsvetkova & Antonova, 2015). However, the emphasis is placed on the fact that mass culture is an attribute of modern society that must be taken into account.

Modern foreign works in the field of mass culture are characterized by methodological vagueness and fragmentation. Foreign studies of mass culture focus their attention on its individual manifestations, primarily at the everyday level. However, the Anglo-American school of cultural studies has a very important methodological difference - its interdisciplinary openness, namely, its connection with political science.

It should be noted that modern western researchers often use not the term “mass culture”, but “popular culture”, without separating the forms of modern mass culture and the historical forms of popular culture (Caso & Hamilton, 2015; Dorzweiler, 2017; Press-Barnathan, 2017; Siuda, 2014).

One of the main subjects of the study of mass culture in the theory of postmodernism becomes the problem of the functioning of information. Scientists pay special attention to the study of mass culture and mass media (Kocheva, 2018; Zhen, 2016).

Thus, within the framework of this study, a mass culture is understood as the currently dominant culture, which artificially creates stereotypical ideas about lifestyle, behavior style, and relations between people.

One of the main approaches to the study is the concept of modernization, which corresponds to the essence of this work. In fact, the ever-increasing influence of mass culture on the culture of the ethnos is the result of modernization.

The problem of traditional societies and cultures in the light of their transition to modern societies and cultures, and the problem of modernization attract the special attention of researchers (Chilkote, 2014; Jacobsen, 2015; Drobizheva, 2017).

In the works of these researchers, theoretical experience in analyzing the transition from the traditional to the industrial society is accumulated. These works identify the general patterns associated with the specifics of societies and cultures undergoing modernization.

Ideas that consider the ethnic aspects of the modern cultural process, which have received wide coverage in the scientific literature, are also of interest for this study. In particular, the works of researchers are devoted to the study of the features of ethnic cultures and their interaction (Kane & Jacobs, 2015). Ethnic culture is understood by them primarily as an ethnocultural identity, as a basic anthropological need (Gerasimova & Gusenkova, 2017), commonality of spiritual life and national identity (Zykin & Tufanov, 2015), a set of material and spiritual values transmitted from generation to generation, created by an ethnos (Kshnyakin, 2016), and which inevitably undergo transformation in modern society (Ryazanov, 2017).

Analysis of the literature shows that, despite the wide coverage, the issues of functioning and development of mass culture in the context of the ethnic culture of the modernizing society are not sufficiently developed, which dictated the need for this study.

Discussion

Ethnic culture is fundamentally different from traditional culture. They are often wrongfully identified in our opinion. This is incorrect, in particular, because ethnic culture today includes many components of culture, including the mass, modern ones.

It seems most true to identify the ethnic culture with the culture of the modernizing society, which also includes a set of different components.

It is known that in the culture of any ethnos, along with a specifically ethnic element, there has always been an international element, that is, a certain amount of learned innovations. Thus, in the ethnic culture of a modernizing society, both of these components can be distinguished. Moreover, the proportion of cultural achievements that carry traditional, ethnic coloring is lower, and the sphere of their functioning is narrower than the proportion of modern mass elements.

The Russian and, respectively, Yakut society is subject to intense Western cultural influence, and naturally, in our society, we are witnessing the features of the Western spiritual crisis. However, the spiritual crisis in our country, expressed in the spread of mass culture, the spirit of individualism and rationalism, is rather a side effect of Western cultural borrowings than the creation of our own cultural environment.

In particular, ethnic culture copies such features of Western culture as mass culture, its hedonistic, sensual elements.

Indeed, the culture of modern Western society should be considered as a type of culture of the sensual type, as a mass culture, increasingly integrating into the culture of traditional, ethnic, societies. The hedonistic tendency of sensual culture is brought to the maximum in mass culture. World culture today is predominantly a mass culture, a culture of the sensual type, which exported its development model, its behavioral texts and value system to almost all regions of the globe.

In particular, large-scale massivization of the eastern ethnocultures is taking place now. In it, we see the influence of Western civilization, which has changed ethnic specificity, behavioral stereotypes and ethnic traditions in ethnic cultures.

What are the consequences of the penetration of foreign elements, phenomena of mass culture in the ethnic culture of the Yakuts? First of all, acculturation.

Indeed, in relation to the situation in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), in different layers of the Yakut people different stages of cultural assimilation are being implemented. Thus, one part of the ethnos, mainly rural, is in a state of weak acculturation, i.e. connects original and alien cultural elements. The other part, which includes separate groups of rural and urban population, is at the stage of advanced acculturation. Finally, a significant part of the urban population undoubtedly goes through a stage of complete, final acculturation.

It is obvious that none of the above excludes the possibility of transforming ethnic culture. The influence of ethnic transformation processes and, especially, processes of ethnic assimilation on various aspects of the social life of an assimilated ethnic group is a very poorly developed topic. And it is precisely in violation of social adaptation that, in our opinion, the most unpredictable consequences of cultural-linguistic assimilation and destruction of inheritance of ethnic culture are manifested.

It is already noted that the loss of ethnic culture leads to the impossibility of improvement of adaptive behavioral models, that causes the loss of guidelines in

life, the destruction of a clear structure of the world and, consequently, a sense of personal safety. Attempts made by carriers of pseudo-traditional Yakut self-consciousness to find a substitute for the lost sense of ethnic community and a sense of social confidence and security by joining other social groups (parties, professional associations, etc.) cannot be successful.

The erosion of the ethnic community of the people, which is a stable intergenerational stable grouping, related by sacred blood ties of genetic kinship, cannot be compensated by other social associations that are characterized by significant instability of their members, goals and prospects.

Ultimately, all this determines the marginal character of the ethnos and its representatives. With the linguistic and cultural assimilation of the individual, he loses his own cultural identity, and he does not master the new culture enough; this creates a conflict of social roles in the individual, and he falls into the category of marginal elements of society. Individuals with marginal ethnic identity are balancing between two cultures, not properly mastering the norms and values of any of them.

They experience intrapersonal conflicts, manifested in disorganization, the feeling of an "unapproachable wall", unsuitability, unsuccessfulness, estrangement, despair, meaninglessness of existence, and aggressiveness.

Earlier, in a traditional society, where all social relations were strictly regulated, there was a very strong connection of people: they felt that they were vital parts of the society to which they belonged. Values of culture were accepted and shared by all its members as sacred and eternal ones. Traditional society, therefore, was distinguished not only by unity, but also by the absolute identity of its members with their culture.

If in traditional society the problem of identity did not exist, then in modern society it is one of the most important. The leaving by the individual his ethnic group usually leads to conflict identity, marginalization, occurring at the unconscious level.

And for our republic at the modern state of society, that is losing or already lost its national-cultural homogeneity, the phenomenon of marginality is decisive. The culture maker in a situation where the national culture exists in the form of a ritual (or rather, the external attributes of ritual) becomes a marginal.

The number of marginal outsiders is constantly increasing. At the same time, culture is understood by them not as a system of values, but as a complex of needs. However, it is obvious that it is the mass culture, the "culture" of the consumer society, that forms socially passive individuals in the spirit of conformism, a spiritual standard with a low level of intellectual and moral needs.

The state of a Yakut, an ethnic member of the Yakuts, but a carrier of Russian and global cultures, can be defined by a sense of social dichotomy, duality and conflict. On the one hand, he does not feel himself fully Yakut, since the whole

Yakut-speaking spiritual culture is closed to him, on the other hand, being fluent in Russian, yet he ethnically identifies himself with the Yakut ethnos. The marginal Yakut is located on the edge of the Yakut, Russian and global cultures, not belonging to any of them.

Objectively, the interpenetration of national cultures is a positive phenomenon, since it promotes the mutual enrichment of each of them. Carriers of synthetic culture have a wider outlook; they develop a tolerant attitude towards representatives of other ethnic groups and cultures. On the other hand, a marginal person loses his national roots, his ethnic identity. Being a genetically representative of the Yakut ethnos, who grew up on Russian culture, he is essentially on the periphery of both cultural environments.

Unlike the deep bearers of ethnic culture, the marginal Yakut is able to see the “frontiers” of both the Yakut and Russian cultures. Living in each of them, he appears as an outside observer of each of them that does not allow him to fully immerse himself in the culture, depriving him of a sense of cultural identity. The result of this state is that the marginal does not fit into the system of social centre, but falls on the periphery of society. Marginals do not have the opportunity to participate in the creation of universally significant and symbolic codes of the culture of their people.

As already mentioned, there is no problem of ethnic and cultural identity in a traditional society. The problem of marginality is a problem of the modern, urban society, which is always multiethnic, with confusing network of social norms and values. Living in such a society, the marginal feels himself lonely, rejected by society, which quite naturally leads him to think about the meaninglessness of existence.

In parallel with the loss of the Yakut language, the assimilated representatives of the Yakut ethnos interrupt the transmission of the central cultural theme. Result of it is the destruction of traditional society and growing the number of outsiders. In their minds, elements of the traditional Yakut culture and other cultures are randomly linked to each other. The traditional consciousness is replaced by a pseudo-traditional, which is an unsystematic set of certain rules and prohibitions.

A cultural transition is most often fraught with the onset of the so-called “semi-culture” period, when an ethnic group that has completely lost its language retains some elements of the original culture, significantly distorting them, and supplements them with missing elements, as a rule, not the best, from another dominant culture.

The culture of the Yakuts, being traditional in its foundations, at the same time entered a qualitatively new level of its development associated with an objective process of massivisation and globalization. The Yakut culture today is a synthesis and opposition of two ways of being: traditional and modern, mass.

Thus, it is obvious that at present in the urban environment of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) a certain subculture has formed, a symbiosis of external manifestations of the Yakut, Russian and well-known mass culture.

The current intellectual, spiritual state of the Yakut people reflects the concluding process of acculturation of the Yakut ethnos and is a sign of the cultural assimilation of its large part.

And when it comes to the fact that in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) only the outer side of Western civilization is easily copied, one should be aware that this is a direct consequence of the penetration of a mass culture into the republic that does not meet the resistance of a decaying ethnic culture and partly replaces it.

What are the ways out of this situation? How, going to a qualitatively new, modern level of being, to preserve our national "I" and our traditional culture, in which the centuries-old experience of the Yakut folk wisdom is expressed?

Here, close to us are the views of Sorokin, expressed by him in the 20th century, which are still relevant today (Sorokin, 2017).

He presents human history as a process of dynamic alternation of three types of sociocultural super systems: ideational, idealistic, and sensual.

In ideational cultural super systems, spiritual values are elevated, while material values are of secondary importance. In sensual cultural super systems, the most important place is given to the material side of life. A special place in the classification of cultural super systems belongs to the idealistic (integral) super systems. This is the embodiment of the most harmonious social model for human development. In idealistic societies, ethical norms are a synthesis of ideational and sensual ethics. As in ideational ethics, spiritual qualities are valued in idealistic ethics. Nevertheless, in contrast to ideational ethics, in idealistic culture, those sensual values that are most noble are positively evaluated.

According to the researcher, only global value reorientation within society itself can become a guarantor of its stabilization, further development and prosperity (Sorokin, 2017). Here is the strategy of finding a real way out for the country and the republic from the crisis: to create a new integral cultural super system - idealistic in its essence, in which ideational and sensual components would be harmoniously balanced.

The idea of forming a new civilization underlies the prediction of relations between the East and the West, given by the scientists. He analyzes in detail the process of moving the creative leadership of humanity from West to a more extensive region of the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic. Sorokin argues that the future belongs not to the leadership of one of the cultures, but to the harmonious combination of the elements of the great cultures of the West and the East (Sorokin, 2017).

Therefore, an ideological transformation of mass culture through its filling with more sublime ideas, socially significant content and aesthetically perfect images is necessary. We believe that the Yakut spiritual culture in all the diversity of its types and forms can and should play a decisive role in such a positive transformation.

The contradiction between tradition and modernity is an inevitable collision in the process of modernization movement. In any country, the movement of

modernization in culture creates two structures, thereby leading tradition and modernity to conflict. In a country where the traditional culture system is deeply rooted, such a confrontation turns out to be stronger and long lasting.

The real spiritual life of Yakutia really goes on an eclectic path and can be specifically described as “not quite traditional, but not quite western”, “semi traditional and semi western”, “both traditional and western at the same time”, etc. This proves that in fact the presence of a national tradition in the life of society is inevitable.

Tradition and modernity are increasingly merging with each other into something unified in the process of modernization. The essence of modernization is its compliance with the development trends of the modern world, but the successful movement of modernization consists not only in overcoming obstacles from the tradition, but also in the constructive use of traditional forms as additional incentives for renewal.

The value, for example, of Chinese modernization is not the passive destruction of its tradition, but the active identification of what to do to make tradition the material for the construction of modern China, i.e. to make tradition to reveal its positive functions.

Principles of modernization of the countries of the East: traditional culture has a generally recognized character and does not contradict modern life; it left a set of images of national cultural identity and plays a useful role in modern life; in traditional culture there are true values, from which people can take the very best; in traditional culture there are some things that, from the point of view of modernity, have already become obsolete, but at one time they had a progressive meaning, therefore one should treat them with respect.

Successful modernization is a process of two-way traffic, where local customs and modern forms and technologies complement each other, and unsuccessful modernization is a process of one-way traffic, where modern forms simply destroy the tradition or “crush” it and disappear.

Going through the turbulent process of westernization, we are again looking for a way to build our culture, adapted to the new conditions. Under new conditions, we must thoroughly and systematically study, criticize and borrow new thoughts in the new conditions. At the same time, we must streamline the value factors of our historical culture, make them meet the requirements of modernization, and thereby re-create our spiritual culture.

Conclusion

In a modernizing society, due to external influences of a huge flow of innovations into the culture of an ethnic community, the share of foreign elements is growing and the share of ethnic components is declining. This situation is reflected in the emergence of two notions: the modern or mass component, and the traditional component in the structure of ethnic culture.

Based on the foregoing, we summarize the present study as follows:

- Ethnic culture can be correlated with the concept of culture of traditional society in the context of modernization. It is multi-component: while retaining the traditional components, at the same time it is increasingly turning into a modern one, carrying in itself the signs of mass culture. The mass component of ethnic culture occupies most of it.
- Mass culture has become widespread in Russia and, in particular, in Yakutia. This is due to the socio-historical context. The rapid development of mass media, market relations, the absence of the dominant ideology, the decline of the role of education and upbringing played a large role in the development of this phenomenon.
- Consequences of the impact of mass culture on the culture of the Yakut ethnos - acculturation and marginalization of the Yakut ethnos. Its overcoming is the dialogue between western and eastern cultures, the cessation of mindless copying of the Western way of life.

REFERENCES

- Chilkote, R. H. (2018). *Theories of comparative politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Caso, F. & Hamilton, C. (2015). *Popular Culture and World Politics: Theories, Methods, Pedagogies*. Bristol, UK: E-International Relations.
- Dorzweiler, N. (2017). Popular culture in (and out of) American political science: A concise critical history. *History of the Human Sciences*, 30(1), 138 – 159.
- Jacobsen, J. (2015). Revisiting the Modernization Hypothesis: Longevity and Democracy. *World Development*, 67, 174 – 185.
- Kane, M. & Jacobs, R. (2015). Beliefs about safety and religious and cultural diversity. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 41(5), 622 – 641. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2015.1057356>.
- Koceva, D. (2018). From Mass Media and Culture to Mass Society. *Balkan Social Science Review*, 12, 59 – 71.
- Press-Barnathan, G. (2017). “Thinking About the Role of Popular Culture in International Conflicts.” *International Studies Review*, 19(2), 166 – 184, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viw030>.
- Sheverdin, K. (2014). Mass Culture: Its Pernicious Influence on Spiritual and Cultural Advance of the Modern Society. *Handel wewnetrny*, 5(352), 232 – 239.
- Siuda, P. (2014). In pursuit of pop culture. Reception of pop culture in the People's Republic of Poland as opposition to the political system – Example of the science fiction fandom. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 17(2), 187 – 208. doi: 10.1177/1367549413508100.

- Sun, J. & Ryder, A. (2016). The Chinese Experience of Rapid Modernization: Sociocultural Changes, Psychological Consequences? *Front Psychol.*, 7, 477. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00477
- Tsvetkova, N. & Antonova, I. (2015). American cinema in France and the USSR: Constructing two models of cultural influence in open and closed societies. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 17(4).
- Xu, Y. & Hamamura, T. (2014). Folk beliefs of cultural changes in China. *Front Psychol.*, 5. doi:106610.3389/fpsyg.2014.01066/abstract
- Zambakari, C. (2018). Modernization Theory and the Metaphor of the Development Ladder. *Harvard Africa Policy Journal*, 2, 14 – 38. SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3128705>
- Zeng, R. & Greenfield, P. M. (2015). Cultural evolution over the last 40 years in China: using the Google Ngram Viewer to study implications of social and political change for cultural values. *Int. J. Psychol.* 50, 47 – 55. doi:10.1002/ijop.12125
- Zhen, L. (2016). Relationship between Mass Media and Mass Culture: Frankfurt School and Cultural Studies School. *Canadian Social Science*, 12 (1), 23 – 28.
- Alampiey, O. A. (2018). Features of economic differentiation and traditional egalitarianism: the challenges of modernization for the Belarusian society. *Socio-humanitarian knowledge*, 1, 90 – 100.
- Arefiev, M. A. & Davydenkova, A. G. (2015). Mass culture as the dominant culture of a globalizing society. *Proceedings SPBGIK*, 190 – 196.
- Borovikova, N. M. (2016). The phenomenon of mass culture: “real” (true) culture or psevdokultura? *Historical, philosophical, political and legal sciences, cultural and art studies. Questions of theory and practice*, 1 (63), 31 – 33.
- Gerasimova, I. A. & Gusenkova, S. S. (2017). The formation of the ethnic culture of youth as a socio-cultural problem. *Culture and Education*, 2 (25), 85 – 92.
- Gorokhov, V. F. (2015). The problem of modernization of Russian society. *Actual problems of the humanities and natural sciences*, 5 (2), 244 – 253.
- Drobizheva, L. M. (2017). What phase of modernization are Russia and its regions in? Reflections on a new book. *Social Sciences and Modernity*, 6, 22 – 30.
- Ermishina, N. D. (2015). Mass culture as a factor in the integration of modern society. *Modern trends in the development of science and technology*, 7 (4), 131 – 133.
- Zlotnikova, T. S. & Kiyaschenko, L. P. (2015). Dialogue on the methodology of sociocultural research of mass culture in Russia. *Yaroslavl Pedagogical Gazette*, 3, 211 – 219.

- Zykin, A. V. & Tufanov, A. A. (2015). On the question of the formation of concepts of national and ethnic culture and the characteristics of their content. *Proceedings of St. Petersburg State Agrarian University*, 38, 344 – 349.
- Kshnyakin, E. V. (2016). Translation of the Mordovian ethnic culture in modern conditions. *Contemporary research and development*, 7 (7), 421 – 424.
- Kozharinova, A. R. (2014). Analysis of the potential of modern mass culture. *Scientific works of Moscow Humanitarian University*, 10, 31 – 43.
- Linetsky, A. I. (2017). Modernization of traditional societies: the path to prosperity or the road to nowhere? *Policy. Political Studies*, 4, 118 – 137.
- Lipets, E. Yu. (2014). Ethnicity and ethnic culture: traditional and modern forms of existence. *Historical, philosophical, political and legal sciences, cultural and art studies. Questions of theory and practice*, 1 (2), 113 – 116.
- Norman, A. V. (2017). *Value aspects of the texts of modern mass culture: on the material of mass literature and television series*: PhD thesis. Simferopol.
- Panfilova, Yu. S. (2017). The family as an institution for the preservation and transmission of the values of traditional ethnic culture. *Socio-humanitarian knowledge*, 11, 324 – 331.
- Ryazanov, A. V. (2017). Features of ethnic and national cultures in the modern world: aspects of transformations. *Actual problems of humanitarian and socio-economic sciences*, 11 (S5), 94 – 97.
- Sorokin, P. A. (2017). *Social and cultural dynamics*. Moscow: Academic Project.
- Khizhnyachenko, N. O. (2016). Elite and mass culture: the problem of correlation and interaction. *Gilea: Scientific bulletin*, 105, 223 – 225.
- Shapinskaya, E. N. (2017). *Mass culture. Theories and practices*. Moscow: Consent.
- Shitova, L. A. (2015). Mass media in mass culture. *The path of science*, 11 (21), 199 – 200.

✉ **Dr. Anzhelina Koriakina, Assoc. Prof.**

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6657-6019

Scopus ID: 57208190201

Russian Index of Scientific Citation Code 9646-4855

North-Eastern Federal University

Institute of Foreign Philology and Regional Studies

83/20, P. Alekseev St., apart.27

Yakutsk, 677005, Russia

E-mail: koryakina1@gmail.com