

VERSIONS FND THE ESSENCE OF VALUES

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to identify the invariant content of various versions and definitions of values as a dialectical unity of natural properties and artificial qualities in cultural phenomena that embody the creative essence of human activity. The object of the study is values as elements of culture. The subject of the study is the options for understanding the essence of values in axiology.

Scientific novelty lies in the presentation of the author's interpretation of the essence of values as elements of culture, which are products of human activity and by virtue of this circumstance, embody the person himself to the extent that he puts his physical and spiritual strength into what he creates. In his brainchildren, as in a mirror, a person sees himself and therefore cannot be indifferent to them: he loves or hates his creations depending on the success or failure of the outcome of his efforts.

As a result, a definition of values is formulated within the framework of the anthropological approach and a typology of values is identified in accordance with the structure of the social system, including such elements as people, things, signs and institutions. The initial unity of people and things creates a value relationship. It is precisely because of this unity that a person is partial to things and the surrounding world is perceived by him emotionally. A person experiences everything external as an objectification of his inner world.

Keywords

Culture, value, creation, person, thing, sign, institution.

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1. Introduction

The relevance of this study lies in the originality and timeliness of the axiological issues in connection with the turbulence of social reality and the obvious revaluation of values in a changing world. The purpose of the study structured the following tasks: the proposed typology allows us to solve 1) the problem of ranking values and 2) the methodology of their measurement. To understand the stated problems, the article uses the following research methods: dialectical synthesis in order to identify deep unity in human activity of mastering natural material and reifying their spiritual wealth in the products of labor, as well as hermeneutic interpretation of alternative versions.

The theoretical basis for the study was the publications of recognized classics of social philosophy Weber (1995), Sorokin (1992), Toynbee (2001), Toffler (1999), Rickert (1998), Scheler (1994), Perry (1926; 1929) as well as the author's own fundamental works (Kryukov, 2018; 2020). Practical significance is expected in the use of the research results

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by colleagues in scientific work and teaching philosophy and cultural studies, as well as by postgraduate students in their dissertation research.

2. Statement of the problem

A person would not be a person if he did not ask himself what is good and what is evil, whether justice exists, what is beauty, ideal, love, benefit, truth. A person would not be a person if he did not try to answer all these questions and did not look for new answers to eternal questions. Understanding these questions is so serious and significant in human life that it led to the emergence of a whole special branch of knowledge, namely, axiology.

The outstanding thinker of the 20th century Sorokin argued that “the presence of a holistic system of values is an indispensable condition for the stability of the social structure. The disintegration of the value basis, value guidelines inevitably leads to a crisis, to a catastrophic breakdown of the social system, to the destruction of society” (Sorokin, 1992).

The importance of values in the life of an individual society increases in borderline situations that are complex and contradictory and there are more than enough of such situations today: environmental disasters, apocalyptic dangers, local wars, ethnic conflicts, social explosions, political confrontation and so on and so forth.

In the fate of an individual, value guidelines are no less important than in solving global problems. In the process of personality formation, a person, through the mechanism of assimilation of certain values, receives an emotional or intellectual impulse that determines the individuality of his spiritual world, which in turn constitutes the essence and meaning of a person and his life both for himself and for other people.

Substantiating the importance of axiological issues for the further development of humanity, the American philosopher and futurologist Toffler wrote that “the future of humanity will depend on how clearly we understand and are able to predict changes in the holistic architectonics of values that regulate human behavior. At present, our knowledge of this invisible architectonics and how it changes is extremely primitive” (Toffler, 1999). What is value anyway? How do values relate to each other and what configurations do they form? The answers given are different, but they are only *versions*.

3. Versions of Values in Western Axiology

The first version of axiology is the *naturalistic psychologism* of A. Meinong, R.B. Perry, J. Dewey and K. Lewis. For them, value is a kind of “tertiary quality”, even more distant from the objectivity of primary qualities (figure, outline of objects) than secondary qualities (color, for example). Thus, the American neorealist philosopher R.B. Perry defines value as an object of interest, as a concept that expresses the position of any thing in relation to interest. “Any object, whatever it may be, acquires value when any interest, whatever it may be, extends to it”. “My interests are myself in the deepest sense” (Perry, 1929). According to Perry, “value is any object of interest. Man lives and acts in the light of expectation, this is a driving expectation; in relation to the object, it is an anticipatory interest, value is its function. In the light of interest, an object can be desired, avoided, feared, disgusted, etc” (Perry, 1926).

Next is axiological transcendentalism. The neo-Kantian understanding of values is set out in the works of Windelband and Rickert (1998). Both of them proceeded from the teachings of Kant, in whose view the main task of philosophy is to critically examine

the legitimacy of the claims of human judgments, including moral ones, to universality and necessity. Values are not an entity, but a must and it remains an eternal mystery, a miracle that is beyond our understanding. Rickert believed: “As for the kind of values that transform parts of reality into objects of culture and thereby distinguish them from nature, we must say the following: one cannot say about values that they exist or do not exist, but only that they mean or have significance” (Rickert, 1998).

Then we will consider *personalistic ontologism*. Its creator Scheler (1994) considered values to be objectively existing, emotionally charged facts. However, according to Scheler, facts are not ideas, but metaphysical emotionality, detached from man: the fullness of ideals and values is in the divine principle, laid down in the foundation of things, but man himself is the only place of the formation of God, hence the name of M. Scheler's teaching - *ethical personalism*. Values form the ontological premise of personality and “are thought of as objective phenomena that prescribe norms of obligation and evaluation to man and form the kingdom of transcendental supra-empirical entities located outside of spatio-temporal reality” (Scheler, 1994). According to the philosopher, values are so objective that they “cannot be created or destroyed. They exist independently of all organizations of certain spiritual entities” (Scheler, 1954).

Scheler considered values to be objectively existing, emotionally charged facts. Another version of substantiation of the supra-personal and supra-natural existence of the world of values is presented in the philosophy of neo-Thomism, in the works of Reymaecker (1947), E. Gilson and others. This concept is characterized by spiritualism, the assertion of the existence of a “superhuman logos”. The neo-Thomist understanding of values is based on the definition of good as “what things strive for in order to achieve perfection”. Revealing the axiological meaning of the concept of value, L. de Reymaecker wrote: “the term value has the same meaning as the scholastic expression *tatio boni* and means that such and such a thing is good. Value is that which does not leave one indifferent, is worthy of being known, felt, which should be strived for and which is worthy of being desired” Reymaecker (1947). The value of a thing, the neo-Thomists believed, is some absolute property, endowed with a supernatural essence, which carries within itself a divine nature, primary in relation to their material existence. Reason is not capable of comprehending the supersensible transcendental existence of things.

The *sociological concept of values* was developed by M. Weber, J. Dewey and E. Durkheim. Weber (1995) was inclined to interpret value as an attitude of a particular historical era, as a direction of interest characteristic of the era, while Durkheim understood values as a product of social consciousness. In this version, values are collective experiences that are not personal but mass in nature. The presence of “value ideas” is a transcendental premise of the cultural sciences. According to Weber, it is impossible to study the world without evaluating it, without giving it meaning. Each of the values is decisive in cognition: not the result of an arbitrary decision by a scientist, but a product of time and culture. “The concept of the culture of a specific people and era, the concept of “Christianity” and other formations as concepts of historical research of an object are individual value concepts, i.e., they are formed through a relationship with value ideas” (Weber, 1995).

Cultural-historical relativism, a new tradition in understanding the nature of values, is presented by W. Dilthey, Sorokin (1992), Toynbee (2001), Spengler. According to this approach, value is understood as the basis for the existence and functioning of any culture. Values and above all spiritual values, are concentrated in people and they form the basis of human dignity. The world of values, along with spiritual ones, also includes

social, moral, aesthetic and intellectual values. The struggle of man to acquire and affirm the world of values is, in fact, the process of realizing meaning in history.

Thus, Sorokin (1992) considered culture “as a set of meanings, values and norms that interacting persons possess, a set of carriers who objectify, socialize and reveal these meanings”. For a sociologist, society is characterized not simply by a set of human interactions, their relationships, but by a certain inner essence, the meaning of which can be expressed by the concept of culture, revealed through values, norms and their bearers. But, according to Toynbee (2001) value is the highest degree of spirituality, this is the inner content of the personality, including the concepts of conscience, honor, mercy, etc.

In addition, the philosopher argued, a separate culture is a value in itself, since it has a unique spiritual appearance, a system of spiritual, moral and aesthetic ideals inherent only to it. The value system of each separate civilization is determined culturally and historically, has a certain time reference. Toynbee derives the concept of value from an understanding of history, the inner content of which is personality. Personality must be a kind of bearer of spiritual values - this is its core and enormous potential, the key to success. “Personality is a growing factor in the Universe... Its strength and activity gradually increase... and often even under the most unfavorable conditions it achieves moral victories that become great milestones of progress” (Toynbee, 2001).

4. Values as a product of human creativity

The author presented his version in numerous publications, in particular, in the monograph “Summa of Axiology” (Kryukov, 2018) and the monograph “Basics of Axiology” (Kryukov, 2020). One can also take into account the arguments of domestic researchers, such as Zakhovaeva (2017). When developing an understanding of values as elements of culture, they should be considered in the existential (existence) and essential (essence) aspects.

“In the *existential* aspect, value consciousness has an emotional nature and therefore it is binary - “yes - no”, “good - bad”, “good - evil”. However, values are not personal, but social in nature and they are components of social psychology and therefore in social ontology they are social emotions, i.e. experiences that have acquired a social character (Perry, 1926).

“In the *essential* aspect, with respect to values, one can formulate the principle of social egocentrism: I (a person) value something else because I see myself in this other and I cannot remain indifferent to myself. Everything else in society is me myself in the transformed form of the product of my activity, the result of my efforts and consequently, it is me myself in an external - objectified, materialized form” (Kryukov, 2018).

The following position is acceptable as a definition of values: *value is a measure of the expenditure of physical or spiritual strength of a person on the creation or development of elements of the natural or social environment*. In objects of nature and in products of culture I see my own face as in a mirror, but I cannot treat my own self impartially: it is myself, depending on the circumstances, that I love or hate, approve of or condemn, admire myself or disgust myself (Kryukov, 2018).

The transformation of one's own into someone else's and someone else's into one's own can be represented as a *communication cycle*. The author believes that there is a process of successive stages of objectification of the subject's content, namely: "from an *idea* to its *exteriorization*, then to the *objectification* of this idea, then to its *alienation* and finally, to a *thing* as the embodiment of an idea, a separate existence in the flesh from its creator. But this process also has a reverse order in the case of introducing external

content into the inner world of the subject: from a thing to its *assimilation*, then to the *de-objectification* of materiality, then to the *interiorization* of meaning and ultimately, to an *idea*. A clear example is writing a book and reading someone else's book. First I think, then I voice it, then I write it down, then I publish it and then the book does not depend on me - I cannot change it and it finds a reader itself. I acquire someone else's book, read it, think about it, become imbued with the meaning of the text and supplement it with new contexts. In other words, in the idea, internalized communication with the text is personified, that is, it acquires a personal, intimate, deeply internal modality” (Kryukov, 2018).

The typology of values in accordance with the elements of the social system is broken down into a *social square*: people, things, signs, institutions.

“*People* are rational human beings who become such by virtue of their mastering things as a result of practical activity. The word “reason” itself goes back to the Slavic verbs “razumeti” and “umeti”, which implies the ability to mark things, to note them or to single them out from the multitude. People themselves are the products of the labor of other people and since the education of the human personality requires enormous expenditures of time and effort of a large number of people, then man is the most labor-intensive product and therefore the greatest value, the type of which is called personified values” (Kryukov, 2018).

“*Things* are artificial objects created by people as a result of processing natural material. People acquire human quality solely by virtue of mastering things and things acquire artificial quality solely by virtue of their creation and mastery by people. Since a person does nothing “just like that” and all his actions have a very definite meaning - a goal as an idea of the future product of labor, then artificial things, unlike fragments of nature, are informative, because man himself is invisibly (implicitly! virtually!) present in them. Well and due to the fact that things are intended to satisfy our material needs, i.e. the need for matter and energy, they form a special type of values - utilitarian (from Latin *utilita* – benefit) values (Kryukov, 2018). People and things are the primary elements of society. At the same time, secondary elements of society or transformed forms of people and things, arise on the basis of primary elements. Institutions and signs act as such.

Institutions (from the Latin *institutum* – establishment, institution) “are the organizational forms of social life, a set of social roles as matrices of human behavior, where these roles are presented as transformed, i.e. transformed into a secondary product, people. There is a person as an individual - this is any of us and there is a person as a legal entity - a citizen, an official, a plaintiff, a deputy. And a person as a legal entity behaves not at all as he wants, but as prescribed” (Kryukov, 2018). This is a social role. “Due to the fact that a social role is a secondary and transformed form of personality, it represents, presents one, several or many personalities. The phenomenon of representation is dialectically accompanied by its reverse side - the personification of a social role. The performer of one or another social role, occupying some position, not only voluntarily, but also by necessity identifies himself and his social position” (Kryukov, 2018).

The main value in politics is power and the most important element of the system of political relations in society is the state, literally in Russian - government.

Signs are representatives of things. “If the word “presentation” is translated as demonstration, then the prefix “re” means “again”, “once again”. When we show someone not the thing itself, but what *replaces* and *represents* it, we use a sign. In the science of signs, semiotics (from the Greek *sema* - a sign, an indicator), there is a basic

definition: a sign is a thing that replaces another thing. The initial in the origin of signs is the *autosemiotic* relationship, namely: everything is a sign of itself. Signs are invented when the autosemiotic relationship is difficult or even impossible to implement. Then people create new things, the only purpose of which is to represent things of the first kind, which we cannot “have”, i.e. have as such, but which we are able to “know”, i.e. have an idea of them. By correlating the first with the second, we can “*understand*” what is being discussed” (Kryukov, 2018).

“*Ideological values* are presented as spiritual. In all languages, the word “spiritual” is derived from the verb “to breathe”. This is not only the Russian “*dusha*”, but also the Latin “*spiritus*” from “*spiro*” - I breathe. Hence the modern European variants like the English “spirit” - soul or the French “*esprit*”. And this is not accidental. The essence of the matter is that the process of communication between people is connected with *breathing*, since the main and most commonly used means of communication is spoken language, *vocal speech, modulated breathing*” (Kryukov, 2018).

Values can be compared with each other, but there are no units of measurement. “Although we are constantly engaged in the subordination of values, we build their hierarchies, rank them according to the principle of “higher – lower”, “more – less”, “better – worse” - all such hierarchies are different. Some people value power above all else, others are attracted by fame, others chase wealth, a young girl needs love and a mature woman needs family and children, while over the years we all begin to value health above all else” (Kryukov, 2014). At the same time, the author is convinced that “a direct dependence of the rank of a value, its significance in the existing hierarchy, its place in the subordination of goods is characteristic of the primary elements of society - people and things and it is determined by the extent of the *costs of their production*. Whereas an inverse dependence takes place for secondary elements of society, transformed forms of people - social roles in institutions and transformed forms of things - signs and images in the form of ideas and ideals and it is determined by the extent of the *costs of their consumption*” (Kryukov, 2014).

Learning the norms and rules of community life, patterns of behavior in various life circumstances, legal regulations and economic models, knowledge in the field of education and skills in professional activities, training physical strength and mental abilities - this is work. To become an educated person, an interesting conversationalist, a partner worthy of love, a friend deserving respect, a professional in your field - all this is a lot of work. Talent is work, genius is work and more work.

Hence the conclusion: “*the dignity of a human personality is determined by the combined efforts, general and individual, spent on the formation of this personality and on the self-realization of the spiritual wealth accumulated by it*. The inner world of a person is expressed externally only to a very small extent: in facial expressions, in the eyes as a mirror of the soul, in clothing and behavior. In its main content, the soul of a person is revealed in communication. The wise Socrates, entering into a conversation with a person, suggested: speak so that I can see you!” (Kryukov, 2018).

5. Conclusion

Thus, the following conclusions were formulated based on the results of the study.

1. The main versions in axiology were *naturalistic psychologism, axiological transcendentalism, personalistic ontologism, sociological concept of values and cultural-historical relativism*.

2. Value is an *anthropological and cultural phenomenon*. Its essence is the embodiment of man in his creations, which is the basis for a person's biased attitude towards his brainchildren - beautiful or disgusting.

3. The typology of values is determined by the *main elements of culture*, such as: people as *personified* values, things as *utilitarian* values, signs as *ideological* values and statuses as *institutional* values.

4. The measurement of values is determined by the extent of the expenditure of physical or spiritual strength of a person on the creation or development of elements of the natural or cultural environment.

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