RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CULTURAL PICTURE OF THE WORLD AS A WAY OF STRUCTURING THE CONTENT OF THE UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINE

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Abstract

The paper is devoted to the urgent problem of the History of Culture module teaching of the University Culturology discipline. The analysis of textbooks and manuals on cultural disciplines has revealed some problems in teaching the subject, namely: the reduction of the culture of a particular nation and the historical period only to the field of art, the unclear methodology of the material presentation, consisting in the enumeration of forms of culture without interrelation. The authors propose one of the ways of structuring the actual culture material dealing with an analytics of the elements of the cultural picture of the world. This concept is rather conditional and includes a set of integrative knowledge about the culture of the people. The authors, being aware of the complexity of the choice, postulate the following conditions in teaching: the impossibility of a complete empirical description of the history of culture of any nation; therefore, the use of the cultural system modeling method, “cultural picture of the world” can be represented primarily as a subculture of the elite (it is described in authentic texts). Other subcultures are reconstructed according to archaeological data, ethnographic descriptions of customs, rituals, religious texts, etc. For the specifics of the elements of the cultural picture of the world, the authors suggest an axiological approach, that is, the allocation of significant ontological, gnoseological, and social categories.

Keywords: Culturology, methods of the history of culture teaching, cultural picture of the world, an axiological approach to the humanity discipline teaching.

1 INTRODUCTION

The problem of teaching the Culturology course consists in the nature of the science itself, which is characterized by a synthetical character, variety of content and methodological approaches. The History of Culture module in the Culturology course is the most problematic in terms of content building, as it is necessary to determine the methodology and logic of presenting the facts of culture. The method of teaching the discipline also depends on the direction of study, program, profile and the year of students’ study. This paper aims to describe the author's method of structuring the content of the History of Culture module (Culturology course) with undergraduates of Krasnoyarsk State Pedagogical University named after V. P. Astafiev (field of study is 44.03.01: pedagogical education and 44.03.02: psychological and pedagogical education). According to the undergraduate curriculum of these areas Culturology is taken in the second semester of the first year.

2 APPROACHES TO HISTORY OF CULTURE TEACHING

We have identified four existing approaches to History of Culture teaching. The first is a description of the forms of culture of a particular historical era – politics, economics, art, education, religion, science and others without an obvious relationship. Apparently, it is assumed that a student himself/herself must establish it. Pedagogical experience has shown that most of the students are not able to grasp the existing connections and the material of culture remains a collection of disconnected data for them. For example, when considering the culture of Ancient Egypt the following items are described: the cult of Pharaoh, religion, Akhenaten religious reform, funeral cult, pyramids, art, literature, writing, music, science [1]. In this approach we have a semblance of anthology, a collection of facts, rather than complementary and mutually explanatory material, fastened by a single methodological approach, allowing to highlight the culture of the epoch as fully as possible, since culture is per se inherently immense.

The second approach to History of Culture teaching can be described as "artistic", consisting in the reduction of a huge variety of cultural phenomena to the sphere of artistic culture or, even narrower, art. Even if these authors explain their approach to culture as creative, they only cover art forms,
denying other forms of culture in creativity. For example, there is scientific creativity, or technical creativity. In fact, the history of culture is reduced to artistic culture [2].

The third approach is defined as "a dominant form of culture in this or that historical era". For example, in the classical epoch of Ancient Greece culture, only sculpture and architecture are looked upon, and the Christian religion and the Church as a social institution are studied in «Medieval Culture of Western Europe» [3].

The fourth approach to History of Culture teaching can be defined as "purely individual". The textbooks and manuals in this area are similar to monographs, not quite corresponding to the genre of educational literature. The textbook in accordance with the requirements of the Federal state standard, should contain a systematic presentation of knowledge in a particular area for learners. However, it happens that the material is structured in a different logic in some literature, which highlights a certain problem, but without systematization [4].

Having analyzed the approaches to History of Culture teaching on the base of existing literature, it is important to note that in the introduction to their textbooks, the authors do not explain the methodological approach to the content of cultural material.

3 THE AUTHORS’ APPROACH TO HISTORY OF CULTURE TEACHING, BASED ON AXIOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

The concept of "value" is characterized by ambiguity. The development of this category have involved many thinkers including E. Durkheim, J. Dewey, P. Sorokin, C. Lewis, T. Parsons, W. Kohler, M. Scheler and many others. The values of culture reflect the needs of a man and society, being the main content of the mentality that underlies the cultural picture of the world.

We base our reasoning on the fundamental work [5], called "European history of mentality" under the general editorship of Professor P. Dinzelbacher, in which German, Austrian, and French researchers carried out a comprehensive review of the problems, included, in their opinion, in the content of the European mentality.

The cultural picture of the world is understood by us as a set of ideas that have a value for a certain social community and the individual. Components for the cultural picture of the world are ontological, social and subjective categories, bonded by value relations.

We have built a value hierarchy of the categories according to the logic "from general to particular", including the urgent needs of a human being from physiological to spiritual. Thus, the logic of interrelation of elements of the cultural picture of the world is built and it does not look fragmented, incomplete or, on the contrary, hypertrophied in separate categories.

The plan of structuring the material on the History of Culture of any era is as follows:

1 Cosmological ideas (understanding of the world, the theory of its origin from mythology to science). For example, if the culture of Ancient Greece is studied, the myth of the origin of the Cosmos from Chaos is depicted, as well as the theories of the basis of the existence of the first natural philosophers are studied.

2 The perception of space and time (forms of existence of matter, forms of human perception of the world). Here it is necessary to answer the questions: how did the people of this era define themselves in space and time? How did they fix them? Was space differentiated into the sacred and the profane one? How was it conceived? Continuing the examples with the culture of Ancient Greece, we turn to the image of the oikumene (populated universe) and describe the world inhabited by the Hellenes, as well as ways of structuring their time (calendars, sundial and water clocks).

3 Ideas about nature as the attitude of society to the space in which it lives and on which it depends. For example, animistic perception of nature involves a careful attitude towards it and dictates a special rhythm of life, as well as pantheistic, panentheistic or theistical religiosity. Therefore, the next point is religiosity.

4 Religiosity as a representation of gods, spirits, demons, the exclusion of the transcendent from the cultural picture of the world. Religious dogmas or their absence determine the social structure of society.
The structure of society (society's attitude to power) shows how people were ranked in the history of culture, and on what factors it depended.

Ethical perceptions need to be studied as a mechanism to regulate society. It is important to highlight what was considered acceptable in human relations and what was not, caused social condemnation as well as legal persecution.

Aesthetic representations in a particular cultural era are determined by the measure of the permissible and unacceptable and are closely related to ethics, as they are within the categories of "beautiful" and "ugly", "sublime" and "low".

Thus, we gradually "descend" from cosmological, spiritual (religion) and aesthetic (art) needs to the levels of everyday human life, capture the spheres of everyday life. In everyday life, there are ideas about the three key moments of life – birth, wedding, and death. We adhere to this scheme with small variations.

Family relations, ideas about love, sexuality, family planning issues, the birth of children. Everything related to these issues is essentially determined by religion, but at the same time affects religion and art, as well as the structure of society. A man spends most of the time working, so the most important social category is work.

The importance of work and rest – work and holiday culture. Work is a physical and intellectual activity aimed at a specific result that meets the needs of the individual and society. Naturally, the work creates scientific and technical discoveries that facilitate this process and stimulate the further development of society in terms of comfort.

Technical and scientific discoveries – this item includes those innovations that glorify the cultural era – from ancient Chinese gunpowder to modern computer and mobile phone.

We believe that it is very important to discuss the state of medicine, because the idea of death as the end of the life of each person depends on its development.

Ideas about the diseases of a man and society, the level of development of medicine. For example, the understanding of the disease as a punishment of God, gods; the idea of a disease as the defect of the biological mechanism.

The idea of an acceptable death and burial ritual. In every culture there is a point of view on the desired and shameful death. A Christian prays to God to protect himself from "vain" (sudden) death, as appropriate preparation in the form of rites is necessary. The Vikings wanted to die in a battle, as it provided them a direct path to Valhalla. Carrying out a funeral ceremony without violations is a guarantee that the posthumous fate of a person will be happy, and he will not suffer "in the next world". Due to the fact that in almost all cultures there is an idea of the other world, we finish the study of the cultural picture of the world of the era by not the fact of death, but by ideas of the afterlife.

Ideas about otherworld existence – this includes mythological, religious, scientific concepts of this phenomenon. Hell and paradise, purgatory, reincarnation, the court of Osiris, the information matrix, etc.

4 CONCLUSIONS

We have made an attempt to build and justify the relationship of cultural forms logically, considering them as a set of values that make up a certain hierarchy. The above list of items gives an idea of the richness of the content of the cultural picture of the world, but does not exhaust its diversity. Culture is so multifaceted and immense that it is extremely difficult to conceptualize it theoretically. However, our fifteen-year experience of teaching the Culturology discipline (History of Culture module) has shown that the above scheme is sufficient to familiarize undergraduates of non-core universities with the basics of foreign and domestic history of culture.

REFERENCES

