

Exploring the Essence of Culture from the Perspective of Culture and the The Genesis of Human Existence

-- The Externalization of Human Initiative and Its Independence

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Abstract

The status of culture in human life is unclear. Existing studies only understand culture itself from the perspective of already completed culture, without conducting a preliminary critique of culture. Starting from the genesis of human existence, examining the formation of culture, analyzing the relationship between culture and humans, and identifying the premises of culture can delimit the boundaries of culture and clarify its essence.

Keywords

Culture, Labor, Objectification, Self - awareness.

1. Introduction

Carry out research on the issue of cultural emergence, the first thing is to clarify the object of study - culture. Regarding the definition of culture, existing studies divide it into broad and narrow senses. Narrowly defined culture refers only to human spiritual achievements, such as symbols, characters, language, and the ideological superstructure; broadly defined culture not only refers to human spiritual achievements but also is embodied in human material activities, such as behavioral patterns and thinking habits. The activities people engage in and the ways they adopt are not just simple material activities, but more importantly, the already formed culture exerts a subtle influence and shaping on people. Culture is not a concept, merely a result of spiritual activities, but is fully integrated into human activities. In this sense, culture is a non - natural state (humanization), which is produced through human activities and in turn reacts on human activities. [1]His research on the definition of culture is quite comprehensive, but in the final definition, he only gave one aspect related to the characteristics of culture. Such a conclusion is not surprising. It should be understood that after the evolution of human society, culture is no longer an appendage on humans, but an existence independent of humans. Therefore, the investigation of culture in modern society always unconsciously takes culture as an objective object. However, in terms of the content of culture, all of it comes from the material world; in terms of its form, all comes from the human mind. It is not a naturally independent thing, and its independent manifestation is essentially the alienation of human externalization. Therefore, starting from The genesis of human existence, from the process of cultural formation rather than the result of cultural formation, is a necessary step in examining the premises of culture.

2. The Material Premise of Cultural Formation

To examine the premise of culture, we must start with the examination of humans. The inevitable premise of culture must be implied in the birth of humans. From existing theories, it is known that human society is the product of the long - term development of nature. The

evolution and development of nature is the material premise for the emergence of human society, and labor is the realistic foundation for the emergence of human society.

Labor is a category exclusive to humans and human society. Marx defined labor as human conscious activity. This indicates that in labor, human consciousness is already playing a role. It should be clearly stated that consciousness and culture are not completely equal. Consciousness is a necessary condition for culture, but not a sufficient condition. Therefore, to understand culture from the birth of humans, it is necessary to conduct a more detailed investigation of labor and consciousness. In the pure natural world, there is no real labor in the true sense. Labor exists in the form of sprouts in the activities of ancient apes, the advanced animals in nature, and there is a process of evolution from the animal - like instinct of ancient apes to human labor. Due to the need for survival, ancient apes polished natural objects such as branches and stones to forage for food or resist attacks. This form of labor plays an important intermediary role in the transformation from apes to humans. Firstly, it contributed to humans' upright walking and the liberation of hands. Engels believed that in the process of transforming from animal - like instinctive activities to human labor, the decisive step was that the hand became free. [2] Secondly, it promoted the continuous psychological changes of ancient apes and made them perceive things around them. Although this perception is only a purely animal - like consciousness, it is the origin of human consciousness. Finally, with the continuous expansion of labor forms, ancient apes needed to communicate with each other, thus promoting the emergence of language. [2] Language is an important medium for the manifestation of culture, and the birth of language means the formation of culture. [2] These statements illustrate several issues. On the one hand, the birth of language has its material premise and is not an accidental result; on the other hand, the human brain is formed under the joint promotion of labor and language, and the human brain is also not an accidental result. Therefore, culture should not be understood as a completely subjective thing; it has an objective basis for its birth. Its content serves the real world, and its form is limited by the function of the human brain.

3. The Form of Cultural Formation

Humans are the coexistence of natural attributes and social attributes. The natural attribute of humans is their material existence, and their social attribute is the basis for the human essence of being human. [3] The so - called social attributes are obviously the result of culture, and the so - called natural attributes should be understood from the perspective of practice in terms of the relationship between humans and culture. [4] For humans, culture is both the self and the object. The relationship between humans and nature can be regarded as the relationship between the self and the object, while the relationship between humans and culture can be regarded as the relationship between the subject self and the object self. The division of the self into the subject self and the object self is a requirement for human development. Without an object, humans cannot reflect on themselves; with an object, humans can develop on the basis of understanding themselves. [5] Compared with other objects, cultural objects have an important characteristic: they are objects set by humans, not the inherent objects of nature. Therefore, in cultural objects, the meaning of the self and the meaning of the object are complementary. What the self lacks, the object has; the more independent the self is, the more complex the object is. Self - consciousness reflects on itself through object consciousness, thereby achieving self - transcendence. [6] Culture is both humans' affirmation of themselves and humans' negation of themselves.

4. The Consciousness Premise of Cultural Formation

As the manifestation and confirmation of humans themselves, culture and the birth of humans have no sequence. Culture and humans are not two independent existences; it is another

expression of humans and humans themselves. The existence of humans at the material level is marked by labor, and the existence of humans at the spiritual level is marked by culture. Human labor cannot exist independently of human existence, and the culture embodied in labor cannot be ignored. Labor without the participation of human thinking has no self - consciousness and is not a conscious activity belonging to humans. Human culture and human activities are mutually foundational. Labor is cultural labor, and culture is culture in labor. The production of material materials contributed to the birth of humans, and the birth of humans is the birth of culture. Humans and culture are integrated. Labor not only produced humans but also produced culture at the same time as producing humans, or it can be said that labor produced humans while producing culture. Humans were cultural beings from the moment of their birth. Humans became aware of culture not at the beginning of cultural formation but when humans became aware of themselves. In terms of time, humans had the concept of culture long after their own birth. But this does not mean that culture was formed after humans. The world exists objectively and does not depend on human will, and the formation of culture also exists independently of human understanding. Natural laws played a role before they were recognized, and culture did not stop playing a role before humans became aware of it. The key to humans regarding culture as an external and independent thing lies in the awakening degree of human self - consciousness and object consciousness. When the degree of self - consciousness is low, humans cannot realize the culture as the self; when the degree of object consciousness is low, they also cannot realize the culture as the object. Only with both self - consciousness and object consciousness can we properly see culture, the culture as the object self. Culture exists independently of human understanding. Everyone in society is an unconscious cultural person. Humans are culture; they are both the premise and the result of culture.

5. Conclusion

From an objective perspective, the formation of culture is the result of the evolution of the material world; from a human perspective, it is the product of the development of self - consciousness and object consciousness. we cannot define culture as an existence with only one aspect of characteristics. Its close relationship with humans determines that the complexity of humans is also reflected in the complexity of culture. Culture is not only the result of human activities but also the premise of human activities. It is the independence of human initiative, and human initiative, as an abstract force, is displayed in the form of culture. Therefore, people can intuit their own initiative and see humans themselves through the externalization of this initiative.

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