

## **ABOUT THE BOOK**

### **"CULTURAL SCIENCE IN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS"**

Pronin A. A.

candidate of historical sciences

Ekaterinburg Academy of Contemporary Art, Ekaterinburg

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At the beginning of the XXI century the social and cultural image of the world swiftly changes. In the modern world relations and interdependencies between people and the whole nations gain systematic and full-scale character which turns into an essential factor of people's way of life and thinking.

The XXI century raises new sociocultural opportunities, but at the same time – new sociocultural problems. The supremacy of the industries based on the use of natural resources (oil, gas, grain etc.) was typical for the XX century, but in the XXI century intellectually capacious branches dominate the economy of the developed countries. Those branches include microelectronics, biotechnologies, telecommunications that are based on modern scientific knowledge.

In the XXI century technologies have a substantial impact on cultural processes which take on a large-scale international character. Diversified cultures come to the historical arena in the capacity of independent subjects (after several centuries of western culture domineering in the world). This situation opens great opportunities both for mutual understanding, spiritual rapprochement of nations and individuals and for their dissociation, dissemination of ideas of national and racial exclusiveness, religious intolerance.

Under these circumstances UNESCO developed a policy of cultural diversity as a main direction of the world community's development. Different cultures are coming to the historical arena after several centuries of western culture domineering in the world. Their intensive growth became the leading tendency in development of

world's culture. Realization of this strategy opposes the tendency of cultural standardization, which is imposed by adherents of "wild globalization" and cultural isolationism, that is provoking radical and even aggressive activity.

Some of the tendencies mentioned above are also relevant to Russia. Nevertheless it should be noted that abrupt changes in socio-economic structure of society in Russia cause the marginalization of certain people and social groups. During such periods of destabilization the necessity for reliable knowledge of culture, its role for life of society and the individual increases.

However, unprejudiced and universal increase of the social significance of culture is not recognized by neither the State nor society in Russia. The State does not consider culture as one of the most important and prioritized spheres of social life in its cultural policy. Ordinary, superficial conceptions of culture continue to dominate in the Russian society – and in its educated stratum.

Developing market relations have an essential impact on culture in Russia. Possessed by market element, Russian culture is nowadays in a very inauspicious situation. We see that the market itself does not subserve cultural prosperity and its prime examples. The "wild", criminal market gives rise to vile traits, it deforms the purposes and acts of a person – especially a Russian citizen, who has never lived in a civilized market society. The individual loses their centuries-old moral guidelines, loses mercy, compassion, becomes indifferent to people and to their grief, withdraws into himself or collides with a social milieu, deprives himself and others of the pleasure of human communication. All this leads to a disturbing conclusion that the key problem is that of culture deficiency, which indicates a deep spiritual crisis of society. It is manifested in the loss of value reference points, moral dissociation, dissemination of vices, aggression and hostility, vulgarity and dissolution, spiritual degradation.

Overcoming of sociocultural crisis and spiritual and moral development of the country demands unification of all sound, constructive forces of society. The matter concerns its educated stratum, the genuine patriots who perceive culture as a strategic resource of the fatherland and the main creative force and national idea of Russia in

the XXI century. This historical problem can be resolved by acquiring scientific knowledge about the phenomenon of culture. This book is supposed to help with this process.

The book contains five key subjects: "Cultural science as a scientific discipline", "History of the West European and Russian culturological thought", "Essence of culture", "Society, person and culture", "Theory of culture: problems". In the aggregate they give a complete and systematic comprehension of the phenomenon of culture and allow to perceive problems of the history of culture, modern cultural life in Russia and the world.