

Sensemaking as the Basic Essence of Culture (Based on the Example of Cultures of Different Language Families)

Oksana Leontjeva

Independent scientist, Kiev, Ukraine

Marina Teplenko

Independent scientist, Zhytomir, Ukraine

Abstract: The article examines the issues of the formation of cultural meanings as a dynamic process, the formation of the semantic core of culture and its role in the process of “expansion” of meanings. Attention is focused on the general features of culture: duality, cyclicity and the ability of culture to create an “ideal” meaning, which are directly or indirectly related to the main essential function of culture - sensemaking. The basis of sensemaking is the semantic core of a culture, which is formed by its DNA and “ideal” meanings. The DNA of a culture is understood as the “ideal” meaning. The “expansion” of meanings occurs through the dynamic connection of “ideal” meanings and “wandering” meanings. The relationship between sensemaking and the vitality of culture is indicated. Three fundamental elements of sensemaking are identified and explained – meaning-images, meaning-constructs and meaning-terms.

Keywords: semantic core of culture, sensemaking, “ideal” meanings, DNA of culture, basic meanings of culture.

1. Introduction

“Civilization is the last stage of development of any culture” (K. Leontyev 2005: 212)¹, the core of which is language, traditions and worldview values. All together (and separately) they become exponents of the meanings of human existence, both ideal and physically objectified (see Pelipenko 2007). Meaning-making has been a continuous process since the beginning of culture; with

¹hereinafter translation by the author – O.L., M.T.

its help, culture creates and maintains its fundamentality and integrity. The process of sensemaking is associated with the constant “expansion” of meanings. When the process of semantic “expansion” in a culture is disrupted, a mechanism of destruction is triggered. According to K. Leontyev, this happens with secondary mixing simplification, “when it (culture), having exhausted its impulse, gradually degrades and dies. Having created a semantic core, culture builds its own system of “abstract” ideas-religious, political, legal, philosophical, everyday, artistic and economic. Every nation with a great culture has such a system of ideas; the same peoples who live on borrowed baggage and are not able to give birth to world-class ideas have culture only nominally” (Leontyev 2005: 213).

The purpose of the study is to highlight and describe the essential components of the semantic field of culture as fundamental elements of sensemaking, as well as to show their interrelation and influence on the vector of development of society.

2. Culture as a Model of Human Existence

Culture originates in a certain space-time continuum and develops in its specific historical reality. It is a model of human existence, which is why cultures differ from each other. Despite the differences in models, all cultures have common features. These features include: 1) the duality of the nature of culture; 2) the cyclical nature of its development; 3) the ability to create “ideal” meaning as the highest value of culture. All of them directly or indirectly influence the continuity of the process of sensemaking as the essence of culture.

2.1.1. Duality of the nature of culture

Duality is inherent in the entire living world. The nature of

everything that is within the space-time continuum and outside its limits, be it a phenomenon, substance or action, is dual. Culture is part of human nature, created by man. The idea of the dualistic nature of cultural manifestations was considered by K. Lévi-Strauss, Y. Lotman, A. Pyatigorsky and others. Culture is multifaceted in its manifestation. For example, from the point of view of the actions performed, culture is both meaning-generating and meaning-preserving. From the point of view of origin, culture arose as a result of the merger of two processes - biological and mental or psychic (see Lotman 1992). From the point of view of construction, culture is simultaneously both a form and a system, etc. All processes occurring in culture should be viewed through the prism of its duality. The same applies to sensemaking, since it involves two criteria - imagination and inference, which are inseparable from each other, on the one hand. On the other hand, we are dealing with a language that organizes “objectified” meanings, that is, it works with the meanings of words (a word is, according to S. Perevolochanskaya, a code designation of a semantic field), and with the mental (psychic) sphere, where meanings “swarm” like endless ideas. The world around us is a world of endless meanings. The world within us is built on semantic images and semantic symbols. Culture transforms the world of endless meanings into the world of semantic images and semantic symbols and indirectly expresses them through language, while materializing meanings (in a word, phrase, text) (see Perevolochanskaya 2009).

2.2 The cyclical nature of culture in nature, everything is cyclical

Following the laws of nature, culture has its own development cycles and thus becomes cyclical. The cyclical nature of culture is associated with the expansion of knowledge

(empirical or theoretical) and, accordingly, with the “expansion” of meanings. In each cycle of cultural development, meanings gradually “grow.” The ideal form for describing natural phenomena and one of the most harmonizing laws of the universe, which organizes the structure of the surrounding world and directs life towards development, is the Fibonacci series, on which the logarithmic spiral is built (see Vorobiev 1983). Using the Fibonacci spiral, one can explain the cyclical nature of the development of any culture. One turn of the spiral corresponds to one cycle of cultural development. In order for the cyclicity not to be interrupted, the culture must move the primary “ideal” meaning-value at each new turn of the spiral. If, at any turn of the spiral, the culture was unable to move this meaning, then the cycle breaks off and the culture goes into oblivion. A culture whose ability to move values built on “ideal” (essential) meanings along the development spiral weakens, gradually declines and acquires a state of peace (immobility). In another case, the meanings-values of this culture do not disappear, but are gradually “replaced” by the meanings-values of another culture. Usually we are talking about spiritual values. Thus, although a culture is absorbed by another over time, it reflects into a culture that “builds on top” of it, “replaces” its meanings and values, but also absorbs them into itself. This is similar to the law of conservation of energy. The energy does not go anywhere, it takes on a different form. And now the culture that has “built up” operates with its meanings, but not as images, much rather as symbols. The meanings and images of the donor culture become the meanings and symbols of the culture that absorbed it. Consider, for example, the decline and disappearance of the ancient Greek civilization, Assyrian-Babylonian, Sumerian-Babylonian and other civilizations, which gave reflection to the modern cultures of Europe and the Middle East, and which partially retained their “ideal” meanings in their

philosophical and religious concepts.

2.3 Creating meanings

Everything that exists depends on meaning; at the basis of everything that exists, there is a semantic principle that bears and supports it; every becoming as being is at the same time the realization of meaning. “Every meaning in the world is correlated with (this or that) value, and every value gives meaning. This provision formulates the essential law” (Hartman 2019: 290). Meaning accompanies knowledge about all things and the understanding of this knowledge. Culture as an integral universe of sensemaking has the ability to unfold meanings, which, as “a quantum of cultural space, a cell of a cultural organism” (Pelipenko 2007: 69), become its innermost spiritual principle.

2.3.1 The meaning of culture as a form and as a system

From the point of view of modern research, culture is considered as a form and as a system. Both as a form and as a system, culture has meaning. As a form, culture has internal content (a system of meanings) and is an essence (contains knowledge about existence). As a system, culture operates with signs and symbols that have their own semantic content.

According to S. Averintsev, by studying form, rather than facts and content, we move into the space of greater meanings. Form is a representative of the absolute world, it shows the absolute background and argues with the content (see Averintsev 1971). Cultural form is directly related to the objective world (see Yachin 2010) and can be defined as a set of distinctive features of an object. The object itself is “a private artifact of the use and interpretation of a given cultural form. Cultural form concerns both material products and products of spiritual (symbolic)

activity” (Flier 2020: 1-2).

The cultural form is dual. “On the inside, the form contains semantic (teleological) formations of consciousness, on the outside, the form provides a constructive connection with the world of things, and is itself a material construction. There are no phenomena in the human world that do not have both sign and symbolic functions. The word both denotes objects and symbolically expresses the meaning (concept)” (Yachin, 2010: 19). According to Flier, the most accurate “reading” of any cultural form is possible only in its natural cultural context (see 2020, Flier).

The form of culture is also associated with cultural meanings that make up its content and can be considered in the system. According to A. Sheikin, cultural meanings are “ideational constructs associated with cultural objects as signs, that is, they are their informational, emotional, expressive content. Information content is associated with the mechanisms of comprehension of the information-cognitive field of cultural meaning. Emotional reflects the specifics of human thinking. Expressive content is an expressive level of meaning, determined by a complex of expressive means and the properties of sign systems, through which the existence of meaning is realized. Thus, cultural meanings are polysemantic” (Sheikin 1998: 214). These ideational constructs create a space of meaning within a culture and are determined by a priori intentions that form a certain grid of coordinates for further sensemaking (see Pelipenko 2007).

2.3.2 Cultural meanings and inferences: the connection

The language a person speaks influences what thoughts come to his mind, what type of culture he lives in, what type of

thinking he uses, and what meanings are produced. For example, cultures with hieroglyphic writing use hieroglyphic thinking. It became possible to talk about this on the basis of research and conclusions of neurophysiologists “about the asymmetry and separation of functions of the left and right hemispheres of the brain” (Ivanov, 1999: 412). The amount of information per one Chinese or Japanese character is approximately five hundred times greater than the amount of information, per one English letter (see Galan 1992). “Hieroglyphic thinking is associated primarily with the holistic perception of information. At the same time, the meaning of words is stored in a form independent of the sound envelope, this is confirmed by the results of damage to the left hemisphere in the Japanese, when syllabic writing suffers, but not hieroglyphics” (Ivanov 1999: 448). On the contrary, modern cultures of the Indo-European language family were transformed into alphabetic writing. “Such writing is a universal model of the constructive power of the conscious activity of a person, capable of creating his own artificial (technical) world from the material of nature (here from voice and sound). Hence the development of the constructive ability of imagination, so characteristic of the European mentality, the development of the technical power of civilization, but at the same time the birth of the illusion that language was created in the image and likeness of the world of things” (Yachin 2010: 17). “In languages with alphabetic writing, the use of symbols can also be traced (for example, in the English and French writing there is no complete correspondence between letters and phonemes, and words just need to be memorized)” (Sanzhiev 2002: 181-182). Consequently, in different languages the concept of “meaning” is also different and often there is no correspondence between languages in the understanding of this term-phenomenon.

In the languages of any family there is a “layer of meaning”.

Meanings, first of all, are formed in thoughts, and then materialized in words. The need for a word arises only when a person faces something hidden – something that cannot directly appear to our senses. The word is an organ of speculation. As such, it is a phenomenon of appearance, not designation. Revealing – expressing (saying) – and designating are not the same thing (see Yachin 2010). According to M. Bakhtin, language embodies the general meaning and significance in a specific sign form accepted in a given community, cf “But it comes to life in communication, acquiring a personal meaning and a unique tone in the word. Whatever the meanings, in order to enter our experience (and social experience at that), they must take on some kind of temporal-spatial expression, that is, take on a sign form” (Bakhtin 1975: 407).

The system of cultural meanings is impossible “by itself”; it exists thanks to social and communicative processes (see Duvanova 2021). D. Leontyev believes that the transmission of cultural meanings occurs in three main ways: 1) through images of actions and behavior patterns; 2) through “other-oriented” (the theory of M. Weber); 3) through complex processes that cannot be reduced only to understanding. The latter method involves getting used to, growing into the fabric of the cultural world, the meaning of which it is (see D. Leontyev 2007). Consider also: “Meaning requires existential, vital participation in it, participation, naturalization, then it acts in the fullness of its content and functions as the bearer of unique secrets cultural process” (Kozlovsky 1998: 34-35).

In a symbolic form, cultural meanings can be transmitted from generation to generation, from one social group to another in the form of “quanta” of information, fragments of its social experience. Such “quanta” form cultural memory, which J. Assman defined as “a form of transmission and modernization of

cultural meanings specific to each culture” (Assman 2004:36). Toporov also spoke about culture as a “sphere of memory” (Toporov 1975: 159). The phenomenon of cultural memory is a certain mechanism, a continuous process in which culture consolidates, identifies, broadcasts its identity and values, reconstructs its own past, connecting it with the present and future (see Mykytynets 2021).

2.3.3 Primary forms of expression of meanings

An interesting fact is that at the origins of culture there were meanings and their outlines. Initially, an action arose, which over time materialized in a word. Initially, meanings are energy clots that are formed by the energy of action. The first meanings were drawn. The first letter that depicted speech was also descriptive. An example of this is rock painting, ornamentation and other types of descriptive art. Culture was born from meaning and itself became meaning, for in it a person learns the meaning of the world and himself. Language can also be classified as a descriptive art (for example, *shekaste* in Iran, the art of writing in China), has made “progress” in the descriptive art. If rock painting and ornamentation repeated and recorded the world seen by man, then writing was supposed to repeat in outline the elements of speech, and subsequently speech itself, and put meaning into them. Over thousands of years of existence and change of different cultures, the basis of any form of writing has remained either inscription (hieroglyphs, letters) or ornamentation (Arabic writing, Georgian writing, etc.). Thus, with the emergence of language, culture had the opportunity to record its presence in the world, create its own unique core of meanings and “launch” the process of sensemaking and semantic “expansion”; culture began to build on top of natural language (see Lotman 1992) and in all its aspects represents a language (see Barth 2003). In language as

the quintessence of culture, “all the laws of the existence of culture are presented in the most concentrated and “pure” form” (Yachin 2010: 14-15).

2.3.3.1 “Unfolding” of meanings

According to P. Sorokin, the development of culture is associated with an increase in the complexity of its semantic system – the core, the elements of which can “unfold” independent mini-cultural systems, but linked in a single semantic field. These mini-cultural systems or cultural systems (cognitive, religious, ethical, aesthetic, legal, etc.) are united by one fundamental principle and express the main value of culture (see Sorokin 1992). All these systems are elements of a single supersystem of culture. Despite their stability, the elements of the supersystem have internal mobility, which allows them to “adapt” to significant historical reality and carry out the necessary functions. Their mobility is explained by the fact that they are able to change their “environment” and thus create many cultural meanings necessary for the stability of culture. It is assumed that the supersystem itself is motionless, since the main value created by it remains unchanged throughout all stages of the historical development of culture. Despite the fact that elements of the supersystem may be open to external influences, the value created by the culture and the internal semantic reflections built on it make it possible to maintain balance and make the culture stable and unique.

2.3.4 DNA of culture or its “ideal” meaning

Like all living things, each culture has its own DNA or “ideal” meaning that makes it unique. But unlike the DNA of living nature, which is a physical structure - a molecule, the DNA of

culture or its “ideal” meaning is an energetic substance capable of combining “ideal” meanings in a way that is understandable only to it in order to create the highest spiritual value. This value lies at the very core of culture and was formed at the beginning of its development. It is the DNA of a culture, or its “ideal” meaning, that distinguishes one culture from another. The DNA of a culture is stored in a field of “ideal” values. Stability in culture is ensured by the field of “ideal” meanings formed by it, which, together with the DNA of the culture, constitutes its semantic core. Each “ideal” meaning covers all levels of human existence and contains four component symbols - physical (biological), psychic (mental), emotional (sensitive/sensual) and spiritual. One contains the whole. By “ideal” meanings we mean primary meanings materialized through words or parts of words. “Ideal” meanings are constant and contain the fixed energy of meaning as “materialized” meaning. “Meaningful energy is not a monolithic mass: it represents different quanta of meaning-proto-verbal, potential, forming the periphery of meaning, and verbal” (Perevolochanskaya 2009: 267). The “ideal” meaning is closed in a certain “shell”, inside which the “ideal meaning” “unfolds”, while new semantic connections are created, each time structured in a new way, which in the materialized world of language is reflected in the word. “The slightest changes in the meaning of a word make it a different word” (Potebnya 1999: 15). “Meaning only accumulates its potential energy as a hidden, probabilistic component on the periphery, in the implication of linguistic meaning. The meaning becomes verbally expressed only in speech due to the chain of implications generated by the speech utterance” (Perevolochanskaya 2009: 269). Despite the change of generations that carry culture (now every 15-20 years), the field of its “ideal” meanings does not change.

2.3.5 "Ideal" values field

The process of sensemaking begins in the field of “ideal” meanings. The laws of sensemaking and design, consolidation and translation of meanings are the primary basis of all countless phenomena that collectively form the cultural universe. The essence of a phenomenon, which justifies its existence, determines its meaning. Meanings outside of culture do not exist, just as culture does not exist outside of space and time, therefore, there is nothing in culture that is not contained in human mentality (see Pelipenko 2007). “Constructed by the activity of human consciousness, meanings carry as their core the holistic world and self-reflection of a person” (Maslyanka 2012: 216). Consider also: “Culture becomes a way of understanding the world. The emergence of culture and meaning is the emergence of the same mechanism for regulating the human in man” (Cheslova 2007: 8).

On the basis of the “ideal” meaning, not only new meanings of culture are created, but also its artifacts; it is simultaneously reproducible. Different languages have created different fields of "ideal" values. We assume that “ideal” values can be materialized as follows:

1. Simple hieroglyphs or simple ideograms in languages with hieroglyphic writing, for example, Chinese, Japanese, etc.
2. Roots of words in ancient root languages, for example, Proto-Indo-European, ancient Semitic languages (Akkadian, ancient Arabic BC, etc.)
3. Short, monosyllabic words in the ancient Sumerian language. For example, the word "two" in the Sumerian language is pronounced as "mana" or "mina", where "ma" and "mi" denote feminine, "na" - masculine. Therefore, two has the meaning of the integrity of the feminine and masculine, as it exists in all systems of living and nonliving things. The Sumerian language used

cuneiform writing. Words written in cuneiform characters can always be read in two ways. It can be read phonetically according to standard writing rules. Or you can use each sign separately as an ideogram. Then each character turns into an independent word, and a whole sentence emerges from the original word.

Meanings were materialized through “ideal” meanings, on which each culture created its own meaning-images.

With the development of cultures, “ideal” meanings either remained the same, while “expanding” their meaning, as exemplified by:

1. Simple hieroglyphs and simple ideograms remained in Chinese culture, they continue to store “ideal” meanings.

2. Simple characters and simple ideograms, once borrowed from the Chinese culture, and similarly created simple Japanese characters are used together and constitute the “ideal” meanings of Japanese culture.

“Ideal” meanings became the first non-descriptive, but speculative symbols (at the same time, some complementation occurred from various borrowed or previous cultures), as in:

1. The languages of the Indo-European family (root languages), for example, ancient Greek, whose culture was built on philosophical knowledge of the world, used the word both as an “ideal” meaning and as a speculative symbol that named several different concepts. Ancient Greek is a typical example of the "expansion" of meaning when Proto-Indo-European. *leg- “to collect” “grew” to logos, which united “thought”, “word”, “reason”, “law”, “meaning”, “concept”, “reason”, “number”, that is everything that constituted being or eternal and universal necessity. This can be interpreted in any way you like: “meaning follows from thought, meaning is contained in the word, the mind has thought, word and their meaning”; and how “everything has meaning - thought, word, reason and law”; and as “the meaning of

thought in the word, the meaning of reason in the law, the meaning of the law in reason, the meaning of the word in thought,” etc. Later in modern languages, with the “expansion” of meanings, this “ideal” meaning/symbol formed several separate words, endowing them with separate meanings. The “expansion” of meanings has become multi-vector. All these words are included in one synonymous series.

2. The languages of the Semitic family (root languages), for example, began to create single-root words from the roots of words, but the primary meaning did not change. The “expansion” of meaning in this group of languages occurred linearly through the creation of a number of single-root words with slight fluctuations in meaning. For example, Arabic culture and the Arabic language. In the pre-Islamic period, short one-line *qasidas* were built on “ideal” meanings, in which the “ideal” meaning of culture was embedded. In the Islamic period, the *suryas* of the Quran are built on the “ideal” meaning of the *qasidas* and at the same time serve as “ideal” meanings to “expand” the meaning. The “ideal” meaning created new “ideal” meanings in the form of words, the meanings of which are “unfolded” in the Quran. Thus, these words-“ideal” meanings become symbols, because new ideas unfold linearly from them.

The interweaving of different meanings of “ideal” meanings and their connections create the foundation for the vitality of culture. In this case, the meaning is conceptually significant. A conceptually meaningful meaning can be represented as a semantic gene, an embryo. “Historically, it is formed in the mental sphere, initially defined as a proto-verbal meaning, characterized by “non-manifestation”, living outside the form, outside the word: it is in search of its signifier. The forms of presentation of such meaning can be different: a word, a synonymous series, even a text. In language, meaning comes to

the fore: it is a system of semantic features with a nuclear seme” (Perevolochanskaya 2009: 269).

Reproducible “ideal” meanings can also be considered as basic archaic forms of culture, which, according to Skrzypek, are “universal in nature and since human nature is the same, then the development of cultures occurs uniformly” (Skrzypek 1989: 369).

2.3.5.1 Fixed and “wandering” meanings of culture

The semantic content of culture is supported by a constant process of sensemaking, the mechanism of which is based on sensations and inferences. Nature is one. Its homeostasis is maintained by an infinite number of connections. Atoms, molecules, the ocean, rain, animal migration, etc. are an example of the integrity and unity of its connections. It is obvious that everything visible and invisible exists thanks to these invisible energies-connections. They permeate the whole world. The world is saturated with them and cannot exist without them. And this world is presented as an ideal infinite world of meanings, which Plato called the world of ideas – *eidos*, pressing over the world with established rules. To designate the incomprehensible-unknowable, there are terminologically similar concepts: *eidos* (Plato), *noema* (E. Husserl), eidetic meaning (A. Losev), foggy something, embryos of mental operations (S. Askoldov), mental images (modern linguistics). Meaning connects the invisible and the visible, the felt and the intangible, the felt and the unfelt; any phenomenon, event, fact, result, object, etc. acquires meaning only thanks to these connecting energies (connection energies). They, having become tangible and passed through inferences, acquire an “ideal” meaning that can generate value. “Meaning “manifests” itself in three spheres – linguistic as abstract, speech as concrete and mental as abstract. As a phenomenon, meaning appears as a single

entity in different forms of its manifestation, in different conditions of existence - at the mental, speech and linguistic levels. The paradoxical nature of the phenomenon of meaning is due to the transformation of different essences of meaning, their semantic metaphor - from mentality to their linguistic systematicity, from language to speech reality (and vice versa). Meaning connects the conceptual system, language and speech (Perevolochanskaya 2009: 1587-1588). "Language will never be what we think, but what thought is done in", as Eco claims" (Eco 2007: 31). According to A. Losev, natural language is not able to convey the full depth of meaning related to the essence of things and their meaning, since it is loaded with human aspects (see Losev 1982). For this reason, ideal meaning cannot be expressed directly, but can only be mediated through natural language. The meaning of a mental representation is embodied in linguistic meaning.

The meaning contains the potential functionality of meanings and is consolidated as a result of the repeated action of objectifying the results of the connection between sensations and conclusions. There are quite a lot of such actions happening at once, but only what appears as a "flash" and is instantly recorded in memory acquires the actual sense.

In addition to the fixed meanings of "ideal" meanings, there are many "wandering" meanings, that is, repeating "non-valuable" events that are not fixed in consciousness and memory, which turn into a semantic "reservoir" with "potential ideal" meanings. These "wandering" meanings remain unclaimed, unsemantized, unfixed by semantic content, and are hidden in the potential area of linguistic meaning. "Linguistic meaning, loaded with matter (phoneme, word), enters a different linguistic space. At the same time, there always remains a feeling of incompleteness of meaning generation" (Perevolochanskaya 2009: 1590), since

“wandering” meanings remain only unrealized potential.

Culture in every new era turns to this “reservoir” of potentials. The semantic field of a culture consists of relatively stable or manifested meanings and “wandering” or unmanifested, but potentially existing, meanings, therefore the semantic field of each culture is unique and individual. “As a complex phenomenon, meaning is not static. It is mobile and in different states” (Abakumova 2016: 227). Humanity exists in a world not of static, but of dynamic and constantly transforming cultural meanings, changing and enriching... (see Duvanova 2021).

It is important to note that meanings do not disappear, but penetrate to the periphery of the meaning of a word with a rich stochastic structure. It is clear that the nature of this meaning is indirect. At the same time, the meaning does not have precise forms of expression. “It is a wandering, moving energy. Meaning is always moving. The value is static, fixed. A peculiar metamorphosing complex is not a planar semantic pattern, but a volumetric semantic composition that exists in the form of fields vibrating in both horizontal and vertical planes” (Perevolochanskaya 2009: 1594).

3 Meanings of Culture

3.1 *Meanings built on "ideal" values*

3.1.1 Meanings-images

Language as a meaning holder preserves all the meanings fixed by it. In these we include meaning-images, meaning-symbols and meaning-constructs, the first of which is basic, the next two arising as a result of the “expansion” of meanings. All these meanings are formed on the substratum of “ideal” meanings of the semantic field and create the uniqueness of a culture, therefore

such meanings will be “read” differently by different cultures. A classic example is the famous legend told by Herodotus. To the Persian king Darius, a messenger brought a message from the Scythians – a bird, a mouse, a frog and arrows, which Darius, as a conqueror, interpreted as follows: the Scythians surrendered themselves to his power and, as a sign of submission, brought him earth, water and sky, for a mouse means earth, a frog means water, the bird is the sky, and the arrows mean that the Scythians are giving up resistance. The Scythians, on the other hand, had put the following meaning into the message: if you, Persians, do not fly into the sky like birds, or burrow into the ground like mice, or jump into a swamp like frogs, then you will not return back, struck by these arrows.

Meanings-images on the substratum of “ideal” meanings create the first semantic layer of culture. They connect sensations and imagination, therefore they tend to be stored in memory for thousands of years. This is an unshakable layer of culture, its inexhaustible source, which is not subject to the influence of either time or any other culture. All types of human consciousness are manifested through meaning-images, including mythological consciousness, which is reflected not only in fairy tales, but also in mysteries that arose on the basis of a cult personifying the elements of nature or ancient deities. Imitating nature, man recreated its image through meaning. Through repeated actions, the meaning materialized and the image acquired meaning, while the meaning itself was felt. The sense felt and materialized in the image became a value. It is on felt and materialized meanings that all philosophical and religious systems are built. Each culture has its own meaning-images, which differ from the meaning-images of other cultures. They constitute the first layer of the semantic core of any culture. They are the most ancient and unchanging. These are non-vanishing meanings, since they are at the level of

both the unconscious and the superconscious. Meanings and images are characteristic of any culture – both tribal and highly developed - and form the basis of any myths, legends, tales and epics, in which the very primary essence of human nature and the nature of the world is laid out in an image and acquires meaning.

Meaning-images are represented in different ways in the semantic field of culture. In the process of “expansion” of meanings, the meaning-image is constantly replicated. It becomes both imaginary and conceivable at the same time, while the “representation” of the image through imagination and “thinking” is indivisible. The image is materialized in language and “thought” according to the type of thinking. Therefore, to understand a culture, it is important to know and understand not only its language, but also its inherent type of thinking. For example, the Romano-Germanic languages (European cultures), which adopted the Latin alphabet as an alphabetic script, are characterized by a predictable logical form and a verbally logical type of thinking. The semantic field is built on logical connections (sequential and unidirectional). For the Russian language (Russian culture as well), predictability of logical form is not typical, although the Russian language also uses alphabetic letters. The Latin alphabet was originally created with alphabetic letters that do not contain meaning, while the Cyrillic alphabet’s letters contain meaning, therefore the semantic field of Russian culture is three-dimensional (there is a past and a future, the present is momentary). M. Bakhtin believed that in the Russian culture ideas are combined on the basis of Christian personalism with features characteristic of Russian philosophy: ethical orientation, the desire for integrity in understanding the human world, with a special interest in its aesthetic side (see Bakhtin 1975). The Chinese language (Chinese culture as well) is idiomal and linked to the hieroglyphic type of thinking (conceptual thinking). Hieroglyphs

have always been sacred (sacred signs), therefore the semantic field of culture is filled with hieroglyphic images. Semantic connections are associative and can unfold in any order, since each hieroglyph is capable of reproducing the entire complex of symbolic associations, which creates depth and a huge variety of subtexts.

Let us consider the image of “labor” as a cultural phenomenon using the example of Russian, Arab, Chinese, Japanese and European cultures. By European culture we mean the peoples and their cultures that were part of the Ancient Roman Empire and for whom the Latin language was the basis of their communication, as well as the reflection of the Roman Empire in the Great Roman Empire of the German people.

The image of “labor” in the semantic field of Russian culture is associated with spirituality, conciliarity, collectivism and represents a special way of life of the Russian person, his striving for perfection, which is expressed and embodied in various artifacts, products of labor. Ancient languages contained in a word (or hieroglyph) a whole conceptual complex that united the objective and the abstract. We consider such integrity as an “ideal” meaning on which meaning-images are formed. So the word “labor”, which originated from two roots *ter/tbr* “to rub” and **dh(e)* “to do”, in the semantic field of Russian culture created several meanings-images: 1) combined the earthly world and the spiritual world, cf “investment of the strength of the spirit into matter for the return of dust to dust and the cleansing of the soul from dust - to eternal life” (“Verb” Dictionary, s. web); 2) concerned the emotional and psychological sphere of life as a heavy burden, annoyance, sadness (Common Slavic), care, anxiety, zeal, suffering, grief, illness (Old Russian); 3) directly related to physical work. Meaningful connections within culture affected creativity and asceticism, since “purification of the soul

and the desire for eternal life” became the dominant meaning-image. Labor is associated with creativity (Indo-European creativity – create, grow, grow). When embroidering a towel, the craftswoman added her own patterns, cutting out the platband, the carpenter put his ideas into the creations. Many meanings associated with the image of “labor” were laid down in pre-Christian times. Work is associated with reasonable self-restraint, aimed at peacefulness, self-sufficiency, non-acquisitiveness, hard work, conscientiousness, honesty, diligence, mutual assistance, worldly wisdom, and the ability to foresee the end result. Asceticism of work is an internal effort, care; it is an opportunity to hear the voice of consciousness and clarify for oneself the image of God. The original Russian principles of labor as a type of activity are boundless hospitality, philanthropy, mutual assistance, justice, artfulness, unhurriedness and regularity. Hard work, order, conscientiousness and frugality are the main qualities on which the content of Russian labor activity is based. “Russian labor is a special spiritual culture of the Russian person, a certain “stereotype of behavior” (Shabatura 2014: 156-157). The meanings of the “ideal” meaning of the word “labor” are asceticism, creativity, striving for perfection. Meanings and images – work as asceticism, work as creativity, work as perfection.

In the Arab culture of the pre-Islamic period, human values occupied an important place. All meanings were built around human values, among which the main ones were generosity and sincerity. All human deeds were associated with these two foundations. “Work” was an integral part of sincerity. They were considered as one single whole. Work was valued as a human virtue. Work was done only for pleasure, sincerely, and not for any other purpose. Work is an act implicated in sincerity. Any person, even a poor one, who sincerely does his work, could become richer. Work is an act of sincerity, one of the ways of

expressing sincerity.

In the semantic field of Chinese culture, great importance is attached to work. Early Chinese characters already had the symbol for “labor”: “𠂔” (depicting three farmers working side by side), “置” (bird and animal catcher, the character denoting a net). Initially they were associated with farming and fishing. “Labor” was the meaning-image of an occupation. The word "labor" is also used to refer to artisans. During spring and autumn and the Warring-States periods, there was already a word for "worker" and it is not very different from the meaning of "worker" in modern Chinese. The meaning-image of “labor” was formed as a “professional worker” and was associated only with the sphere of human activity. During the Warring States period, "labor" also meant "toil" or hardship. “Work” (*lao*) was also written in the shape of a “heart,” meaning “those who govern the country work hard with their hearts and minds.” “Work” in the Zhuangzi Rang Wang chapter was understood as “move your body.” A similar expression appears in *The Book of Later Han: Biography of Fangshu*. Hua Tuo said: “The human body wants to work, but it should not be used to extremes.” Thus, the meaning-image of the word “labor” (*lao*) had a functional meaning and was associated with the type of activity, burden and movement of the body. Work was praised and received approval. The upper part of the hieroglyph indicates the area of application of force, the lower part of the hieroglyph is conventionally divided into three categories - clothing, heart, strength. Its meaning is effort and hard work, fatigue, exhaustion, merit, reward, comfort. The hieroglyph “labor” contains a whole semantic sequence, a cause-and-effect chain. A good human life comes from work, as well as survival and development. The meaning of “work” was how to overcome heaviness and pain and finally find hope and joy. Wealth comes from work.

The image of “labor” (*goto*) in the semantic field of Japanese culture is represented as “a body in motion,” since it originally meant “the sudden movement of something that is at the top, and then move the body from there.” Semantic connections are built on this “ideal” meaning. Let us consider several semantic connections. The word “work” consists of two hieroglyphs, where both have the same meaning, but different origins and is explained as “I can do my best, hard work, work until exhaustion, work and get results, decent work, must – is work, for life”. A body in motion is an associative meaning-image, which is typical for hieroglyphic languages. The body in motion can be associated with Kamina Miti - “the path of the gods” (there are about 8 million). The human body must go along the path of the gods through moral purification and miraculous healing. One of the stages of this path is cleanliness and ideal order (work is associated with cleanliness and ideal order). “Body in motion” makes you feel what you are doing, that is, working - the feeling of work. The whole world is permeated with mysterious principles and understanding these principles is difficult. Labor and talent are indistinguishable in the semantic field of culture and create one meaning-image. It follows that work as hard work, and talent as ability and effort will lead to success. Success is viewed as a connection with the highest (the mountain is revered). Work is associated with collectivism, efforts for the benefit of the group and is *kama* - “the path of the gods”, which ensures holistic harmony of the body. Collectivism, genuine hard work and its outward appearance are a virtue. This is the realization of a certain deep and strong feeling that is part of the general attitude of the Japanese. The “Way of the Gods” is a special way of life. The meaning of the “ideal meaning of the word “labor” is a collective path, abilities, diligence as a “divine”, a virtuous quality of a person. Meanings-images – labor as a collective path, labor as

diligence, labor as a talent for diligence. The talent for diligence is the best human ability.

The image of “labor” in the semantic field of European culture is borrowed from the Latin language and was initially presented as burden, tension, pain and fatigue, desire, suffering, effort, which is recorded in the Latin language. Meaningful connections are formed at the level of the biological and mental, and concern only the essence of a person, which connects meaning-images with obtaining food and the structure of life. The Latin *labor*, having replaced the original English swink, “pulled over” its meaning of hard, exhausting work. Thus, the meaning-images in the Latin language are associated with the division of society in the Ancient Roman Empire into class and estate, where slavery was part of the structure of society, therefore, each class had its own meaning-image of labor. The Latin language was sign-logical, therefore the meanings-images were “constructed” in classes and in relation to classes and did not receive a single semantic integrity. The meaning-image of “labor” as hardship, suffering, pain and fatigue belonged to the lower classes and represented a way of physical survival (slaves, plebeians). The upper classes associated “work” with the desire to organize life. Semantic connections are unidirectional, consistent and logical, therefore the meaning-image of “work” has several representations as the structure of life, as getting food, as hard work, pain and fatigue. The meaning of the “ideal” meaning of the word “labor” is constructed from several meanings-images and is not holistic in essence. Despite the fact that the archaic layer (etymological meanings) on which the images are supposedly created is almost the same for the cultures examined in the study, each of them created a meaning-image unique to it.

3.1.2 Meanings-symbols

The images that arise on the basis of “ideal” meanings in the semantic field of culture become a kind of substratum for the emergence of a new semantic layer. Substrata of meaning-images are united according to some characteristic incomprehensible to us into conglomerates that are symbolized, that is, are in a relationship that is significant only in certain relationships and concentrates in a generalized form the significance of their specific properties as “super-important” or “super-real”. Consider also: “Symbolization is the process of creating concepts-symbols at an abstract-generalized level, which are not just an analogue sign that replaces a specific object or phenomenon, but concentrate in a generalized form the significance of their specific properties as super-important. The symbol is self-sufficient, it has intrinsic value. It fits organically into mental and spiritual life... A symbol is an internal semantic core, a storehouse of meanings” (Abakumova 2016: 231). According to S. Averintsev, “The object image and the deep meaning appear in the structure of the symbol, as two poles, inconceivable one without the other (for meaning loses its manifestation outside the image, and the image without meaning falls apart into its components), but also separated from each other, so that it is revealed in the tension between them. Transitioning into a symbol, the image becomes “transparent”; the meaning “shines through” it, being given precisely as semantic depth, semantic perspective” (Averintsev 1971: 155). The meaning-symbol within a culture is controlled by emerging meanings - meaning-images and “wandering” meanings, which also influence the creation of the meaning-symbol. The initial functional base of the symbol was associated with the object-shaped component of psychosemantic existence, where the dominant was the empirical generalization, which consisted of

vereneration (in a totem) and the performance of ritual actions - rituals with various objects, images removed from them, carried out in the corresponding specific conditions of use (see Abakumova 2016).

The essential meaning of culture appears as a result of the interaction of two layers of the semantic field - meaning-images and meaning-symbols, due to which culture becomes self-sufficient. The meanings-symbols generated by the meanings-images differ slightly from them. Meanings and images can only appear within culture; outside culture they lose the ability to interact with each other, while remaining indifferent. Outside of culture, only meanings-symbols appear. The symbols of one culture can be “read” by another culture, so cultures can be in “dialogue” with each other at the level of symbols. The symbol becomes an image of cultural identity and conveys the relationship between external objects and the images that arise in the psyche as a result of this influence (see Whitehead 1990). Meanings-symbols arise in two ways: 1) on the substratum of meanings-images of one’s own culture; 2) with the “attraction” of meanings and images of the culture that is being absorbed. Moreover, the percentage of meaning-images of the “absorbed” culture can be very high if this culture was already highly developed. Meanings and symbols appear as a result of the mutual activity of imagination and inference. “The meaning of a symbol in the process of increasing alienation from the original meaning of the word is not at all connected with the semantics of the word itself”, claims Kolesov (2002: 53). “Meanings-symbols have a well-defined contour and a certain depth – the promise of meaning” (Perevolochanskaya 2009: 267).

The meaning-symbol expresses the integrity of the world of cultural images and is presented as a certain value. “It is thanks to value-symbolic intuition that a sensually perceived image turns

into a means for adequate and convincing transmission of ideal meaning” (Alefirenko 2010: 8-9). Philosophical concepts of cultures are built on meaning-symbols, and on the interaction of similar meaning-symbols of different cultures, religious systems are finally created and their ethical component is formalized. There is no such thing as “culture without religion or religion without culture, and the only creature with a religious need in the natural world is man” (Jezewsky 2015: 57). “Religious-philosophical systems direct culture towards transcendence, which, on the one hand, is its true object, and on the other, constitutes the goal and eschatological realization, the implementation of which begins in cultural reality” (Rusecki 1989: 143)

The meaning-symbol is subject to stereotyping, which ensures its conditional staticity in order to prevent the influence of unmanifested “wandering” meanings located in the semantic field of culture: it becomes resistant to their potential influence. A stereotype fixes the semantic unambiguity of the boundaries of the meaning-symbol. Acquiring a certain conditional staticity, the meaning-symbol materializes the ideas of culture. The symbol, according to Cassirer, is “the synthesis of the world and the spirit” (Cassirer 2001: 87). A. Bely believed that a symbol is a manifestation of the eternal and truthful in time (see Bely 1994). Being static, the meaning-symbol affects the sphere of supra-situationalism and, as a construct, “constructs” the symbolic picture of the cultural world. It is nationally specific and is motivated by the semantic connection that exists between the objective and abstract elements of its content (see Fedoseeva 2015). “Constructs are applicable not only to external events, but also to the inner life of people” (Weber 1990: 624). And they strive to replace the “subjective” meanings of the actual participants in the situation (see Zolyan 2018).

Let us consider the creation of the meaning-symbol of the

word “labor” in the semantic field of Russian culture. The meaning-symbol of the word “labor” is connected, according to T. Vendina, with hidden ethical meanings. According to them, in the Old Church Slavonic language, “labor” had a religious and moral motivation and implied efforts that significantly exceeded human capabilities. “Labor was viewed as a martyrdom or as an integral part of asceticism and was perceived as a moral imperative of human life, regulating all aspects of human existence. For man “labors” himself in the name of the Lord. In the Old Church Slavonic work was a test of fortitude, one of the forms of asceticism and moral action that leads to the salvation of the soul, and therefore a godly deed. Labor was considered not in the system of human relations, but in the system of relations between man and God. Hence the idea of the value of labor: suffering and torment of labor were perceived as self-affirmation of the individual, who, overcoming them, strengthened his spirit and sought to become like Christ in his actions” (Vendina 2022: 161-163). “Labor” becomes a symbol of spiritual perfection and a way of spiritual rebirth (the rebirth of man in the spirit, the created in the divine), therefore questions of existentiality were not relevant for Russian culture, because the meaning-symbol of culture became “life in God”, as the highest ideal of human existence, its spiritual value. The meaning-symbol of “work” is also the freedom of man from the corruptible worldly things.

In the semantic field of Arab culture of the Islamic period, work was directly related to God. The Muslim became attached to a merciful God, who was pleased with good morals and was angry at any meanness that led a person astray from his true purpose on earth. Generosity and sincerity were the main values that Islam emphasized. Generosity is one of the names of the Almighty – the Most Generous. Generosity is the path to salvation. God is generous, loves generosity, loves excellent morals and hates

immoral ones. The Islamic approach added etiquette, restrictions and controls to generosity, increasing its purity, sublimity and brilliance. Excellent morals also included the work that a person performed for the sake of his true purpose. “Labor” was read as the sincerity and generosity of a person in the eyes of God and as the purpose of man on earth. The meaning-symbol of “work” is sincerity, generosity and purpose. Sincerity refers to doing work for the pleasure of God alone and not for any other purpose such as praise or worldly gain, and God has established this as the basic condition for accepting good work. He who hopes to meet his Lord, let him do good work and not associate anyone with the Lord in worship (see Quran Surah Al Kahf: 110).

In the semantic field of Chinese culture, a syncretic meaning of “labor” appears within the framework of the “labor boundary”. In *The Three Kingdoms of Wei Zhi*, Zhong Hui Zhuan wrote: “work on our borders and invade our borders with Di and Qiang,” which meant “do something unpleasant” (see www.chinawriter.com.cn). On the other hand, “labor” is associated with hard work and human self-improvement. The meaning-symbol of “work” is self-improvement. Enduring adversity, but through perseverance achieving human resilience and determination. Work makes a person with a capital letter. Self-improvement combines perseverance, resilience and determination. The meaning-symbol of “work” is self-improvement through hard work, perseverance and determination.

In the semantic field of Japanese culture, the meaning-symbol “labor” has become a combination of two hieroglyphs with almost the same meaning – Chinese and native Japanese –, thus strengthening the associative connection within the semantic field of culture. “Labor” became a symbol of success. Unlike success in European culture, which is built on a person's ability to achieve it, success in Japanese culture is built on diligence, where diligence

is a more significant virtue than ability. Only through diligence is a person able to follow the path of the gods and reach the top of the mountain of success, so revered in ancient Japanese culture. Man gains the freedom of eternity in the diligence of earthly life. The meaning-symbol “work” implies “zeal for the good of eternity” and is correlated with harmony within any social group (eternally existing harmony between the gods). The result of success in Japanese society is unquestioning respect, and that is eternal. Thus, “labor” is a symbol of diligence for the benefit of eternity. Japanese culture is filled with a lot of symbols. These can be not only things or animals, but also people who carry symbolism within them.

In the semantic field of European culture, the meaning-symbol of the word “labor” was directly formed on the Protestant work ethics, which was described by M. Weber. Work was implied as a virtue, so it was necessary to work conscientiously and diligently. Material wealth, and not hoarding and luxury, was supposed to be the result of conscientious work and monastic asceticism in everything. The meaning-symbol of “work” is an ascetic lifestyle built on diligence and conscientiousness in fulfilling one’s duty (we see this today in the example of German culture.) Wealth was seen as a well-fulfilled duty to God. If God shows you this path, following which you can, without damage to your soul and without harming other, legal ways, earn more than on any other path, and you reject this and choose a less profitable path, then if you interfere with one of the purposes of your calling, you refuse to be a steward of God and to accept his gifts in order to be able to use them for his good when he wills it. You should work and grow rich not for the pleasures of the flesh and sinful joys, but for God (see Weber 1990). From the 16th century at the apogee of the development of the Holy Roman Empire of the German people, “work” in European culture was “ennobled” and

understood inextricably in connection with the earthly and transcendental. Meaningful connections are aimed at forming the image of labor as a virtue. Labor becomes “an expression of human destiny, spiritual communication with God, human nature is unthinkable without labor and implies conscientiousness, diligence to achieve material wealth, thrift, enterprise, the increase in wealth as a net increase in being is understood as an element of creativity. This is the basis of a person’s work activity in his connection with God. Later God was replaced by the transcendental. A person dies if the foundations of labor activity collapse. But most importantly, the connection with transcendence, with the sphere of the divine, which blesses a person to transform his life, is severed. “Labor is an invariable companion of human existence. However, its role in different societies turns out to be special, depending on the axiological dimension of a particular culture. In European history, work was glorified and poeticized, but to the same extent it was belittled, denying its significance for human existence” (Spirova 2007: 52). The meaning-symbol “work” is built on the combination of the earthly and the transcendental and becomes a virtue on the path to the transcendental. The meaning of the symbol is also twofold - work as success and work as virtue.

3.1.3 Constructed meanings. Meanings-terms

Meaning-constructs divided human nature into created and divine. Duality required an explanation in terms of rationality, built on Aristotelian logic, and in terms of emotion, that is, mental, and as a result, a new layer of the semantic field of culture is created – the construction of rational and emotionally charged meanings. These meanings are based on inferences and they exist at the subconscious and conscious levels. The action of these terminated

semantic conglomerates is observed over a long period. Termination destroyed the unity of the created and spiritual in man, making the nature of the mind and the nature of emotion limitless.

Meanings-images created on “ideal” meanings are mobile and endless; meanings-symbols “stabilize” meanings-images, making the cultural picture of the world stable. Meaning-terms have their limit and their border, but do not have depth, that is, they are not able to provide perspective and “expansion” of meaning, but began to construct a “new” reality of the world of ideas in the picture of the world of culture that is devoid of meaning. Meanings were replaced by technologies, depriving culture of development. Within culture, meanings-terms began to give new forms to eternal meanings-images and meanings-symbols, and thus an attempt is made to construct a new meaning within the framework of terminology. Such meanings provide ideological needs, while different functions of culture are used. Y. Lotman and A. Piatigorsky believed that even “scientific texts can be used in society as religious or magical, performing three different cultural functions” (Lotman 1992: 243-247). In the modern world, meanings and terms have become “given” and dependent on the ideas expressed by someone. Today, humanity has gone too far in constructing new meanings, which are increasingly divorced from culture and create instability, both personal and overall civilizational. The meanings of culture do emerge, but, being in a state of disunity of mind and sensations and constructing his life in terms or stereotypes, a person loses the only meaning of his existence. The meanings of culture are not born and do not live in terms; they remain outside of terminology. Culture, being in constant meaning-forming dynamics within its semantic field, is capable of returning a person to his origins and giving value and meaning to his life.

A striking example of the implementation of the meaning-concept of “labor” in the era of Soviet power was the monument to the architect Vera Mukhina “Worker and Collective Farm Woman”, which became a manifesto of freedom of labor as the highest human value. In that era, the word “worker” appeared in the Russian language, which invariably carried the semantic load of “companion of freedom.” Morality and moral work for the sake of freedom became the ideological basis of Soviet society. Despite the persecution of the church and the prohibition of God, the religious and philosophical hidden meaning was “read” in this concept. Man aspired not to God, but to work as the highest spiritual value. In fact, we are observing a substitution of the words God-work, but not a substitution of meanings. The grammatical form of the verb “to work (labor)” requires the Instrumental case, which contains the semantic “together” and also requires certain efforts: to work on a problem, etc., that is, hidden (hidden) meanings-images and meanings-symbols are preserved in the grammatical -semantic field of culture.

In Arab culture today, meaning-constructs were formed by merging different values of Islam and further “merging” them with pre-Islamic human values. Thus, in Arab culture, meaning-constructs were formed by “merging” meaning-images and meaning-symbols. Such meaning-constructs “guide” all modern processes, including those related to work. “Labor” is understood as charity, to work voluntarily, without coercion, to work according to the rules, a human act, a human effort. Until now, “work” is a person’s destiny and also remains linear, but at the same time reveals all the ethical norms ascribed to Arab society. Work is one of the ethical norms today.

In modern Chinese, the word "labor" is cognate with the Japanese, which developed much Western political thought and vocabulary in the late 19th century, and is understood as "menial

work" (hard work), hence laborer. Labor is the physical strength to do work. "Labor" and "laborer" are fixed in this meaning in Chinese dictionaries.

In Japanese culture, "work" today means "what a person does to earn money" and "occupation." This concept includes, in addition to those already mentioned, the action of creating something, achieving a goal, the consequences of actions, productivity (zeal), action, creativity (handicraft). "Labor" and "work" today are perceived as compatible concepts, in fact, as in other cultures. The meaning-concept of "labor" is correlated with the meaning-concept of "VA", but they do not replace each other, only enter into a strong associative semantic connection. "VA" is an integral part of social life, the meaning of which is to establish harmonious relations between a person and the social group to which he belongs. There are no personal interests, because the gods are united, socially subordinate to each other, the institution of "sacred kings" (see 2014, Meshcheryakov).

In European culture, the concept of "labor" has acquired an institutional framework (the British Labor Party, various trade unions for the protection of workers' rights). Labor became an institution of power and control. On the one hand, labor became a political instrument of the social democratic movement, on the other hand, based on the Protestant work ethics, it acquired the meaning of social justice and strengthening the rights of workers. The word laborist appears, that is, a person performing unskilled work for wages (slave, plebeian in Ancient Rome). The meaning and concept of "work" implies the "right to freedom" (to be free). If previously such rights were achieved or not achieved through uprisings, then the meaning-constructs in the semantic field of European culture constructed a political (democratic) component (s. Ancient Rome).

The above examples corroborate our assumption that all

meanings have long existed in the semantic field of culture. At each new stage in the spiral of cultural development, the basic meanings remain unchanged, only the form of their linguistic expression changes. The stability of meanings in the semantic field is ensured by the original “ideal” meanings and thinking itself. This becomes an indisputable fact, no matter how hard they try to control reality and construct new meanings to suit modern ideology.

4 Conclusions

1. The semantic field created by culture as a way of understanding the world is fundamental for its existence in the civilizational space.

2. Culture creates its own semantic core, which consists of cultural DNA and “ideal” meanings. The DNA of a culture is the energetic substance through which its “ideal” meaning is expressed. Each culture has its own “ideal” meaning and it is basic.

3. “Ideal” meanings materialize differently in different cultures, as shown in the examples of European, Russian, Arab, Chinese and Japanese cultures.

4. The “expansion” of meanings occurs through dynamic connections of “ideal” meanings with “wandering” meanings.

5. Meanings-images and meanings-symbols as fundamental elements of the semantic field of culture individualize it and make it stable in the civilizational space.

6. Meaning-constructs can either be borrowed from other cultures, or arise as a result of the connection of meaning-images and meaning-symbols in the semantic field of culture. For the research corpus, we took examples of cultures from different language families.

7. It is shown by the example of the concept of “labor”, which

functions in various cultures, that culture, being in the meaning-forming dynamics within its semantic field, is capable of returning a person to his origins and giving value and meaning to his life.

References

- ABAKUMOVA, I., ERMAKOV, P., KOLTUNOVA, E. (2016): Symbol in the context of psychoanalytic and semantic interpretation. *Russian Psychological Journal*. Vol. 13. Nr 2. P. 225-233.
- ALEFIRENKO, N. (2010): *Linguoculturology: the value-sense space of language*. Moscow: Flinta; Nauka.
- ASSMAN, J. (2004): *Cultural memory*. Moscow: Languages of Slavic Culture.
- AVERINTSEV, S. (1971): *A Concise Encyclopaedia of Literature*. Moscow: Soviet Encyclopaedia.
- BAKHTIN, M. (1975): Forms of time and chronotope in the novel: essays on historical poetics. *Questions of Literature and Aesthetics: Studies of Different Years*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura.
- BARTH, R. (2003): *Fashion system: articles on semiotics of culture*. Moscow: Publishing house named after Sabashnikov.
- BELY, A. (1994): Criticism. Aesthetics. *Theory of Symbolism*. Vol. 1. Moscow: Art.
- CHISLOVA, A. (2006): *The semantic world of culture and dialogue*. Rostov-on-Don: Rostov State University Publishing House.
- DUVANOVA, N. (2021): The category of cultural sense and its functioning in artistic culture. *Bulletin of Kemerovo State University of Culture and Arts*. Nr 54. P. 66-73.
- ECO, U. (2007). *Absent structure. Introduction to semiology*. – St. Petersburg: Symposium.

- FEDOSEEVA, L. (2015): Symbols in the Russian linguocultural community. *Language and culture*. Nr 2(30). P. 98-104.
- FLIER, A. (2020): The phenomenon of cultural form. *Culture of culture*. Nr 1. P. 1-8.
- GOLAN, A. (1992): *Myth and symbol*. Moscow: Russlit.
- HARTMANN, N. (2019): Sensemaking and sense fulfillment. *HORIZON. Phenomenological research*. Nr 8 (1). P. 267-310.
- IVANOV, V. (1999): *Selected works on semiotics and cultural history*. Vol. 1. Moscow: Languages of Russian Culture.
- JEŻEWSKI, M. (2015): Korelacja pomiędzy kulturą a religią. *Fides et ratio*. Nr 4(24)
- KASSIRER, E. (2001): *Philosophy of symbolic forms*. Vol. 2. Moscow, St.-Petersburg: University Book.
- KOLESOV, V. (2002): *Philosophy of the Russian word*. St. Petersburg: Yuna.
- KOZLOVSKY, V. (1990): *Cultural sense: genesis and functions*. Kiev: Naukova Dumka.
- LEONTYEV, D. (2007): *Psychology of sense. The nature, structure and dynamics of the semantic reality*. Moscow: Smysl.
- LEONTYEV, K. (2005): *Byzantism and Slavism. Complete Collected Works and Letters in 12 vols*. Vol. 7. Book 1. St. Petersburg: "Vladimir Dal."
- LOSEV, A. (1982): *Sign. Symbol. Myth*. Moscow: Moscow University Publishing House.
- LOTMAN, YU. (1992): *Articles on semiotics and topology of culture*. Tallinn: Alexandra.
- MASLYANKA, YU. (2012): The phenomenon of sense and the sense of life: the main paradigms of research. *Bulletin of Orenburg State University*. Nr 7. P. 215-220.
- MESHCHERYAKOV, A. (2014): *Terra Niponica: Habitat and*

- environment of imagination*. Moscow.: Delo Publishing House.
- MYKYTYNETS, O. (2021): Mechanisms of translation of cultural senses in art. *Manuscript*. Vol. 14. Nr 1. P. 567-571.
- PELIPENKO, A. (2007): The birth of sense. *Personality. Culture. Society*. vol. 9. Nr 3 (37). P. 69-95.
- PEREVOLOCHANSKAYA, S. (2009): Paradoxicality of the energy of sense. *Bulletin of Nizhny Novgorod University named after N.I. Lobachevsky*. Nr 5. P. 267-271.
- PEREVOLOCHANSKAYA, S. (2009): Conceptual "Wholesomeness" of sense. *Proceedings of the Samara scientific center of the Russian Academy of Sciences*. Nr 6 (8). pp. 1587-1595.
- POTEBNYA, A. (1999): *Thought and Language*. Moscow: Labyrinth.
- RUSECKI, M. (1989): *Istota i geneza religii*. Warszawa: Verbinum.
- SANZHIEV, B. (2002): Chinese hieroglyphic writing and brain asymmetry. *Society and State in China: XXXII Scientific Conference*. Moscow: Labyrinth.
- SHABATURA, L. (2014): Cultural peculiarities of Russian labour activity. *Humanities and social sciences*. Nr 2. P. 156-162.
- SHEIKIN, A. (1998): Sense cultural. *Culturology. XX century: encyclopaedia*. Vol.2. St.-Petersburg: Aleteia.
- SOROKIN, P. (1992): *Man. Civilisation. Society*. Moscow: Publishing House of Political Literature.
- SPIROVA, E. (2017): Labour as a cultural phenomenon. *Philosophical school*. Nr 1. P. 52-60.
- SRZYPEK, M. (1989): *Oświecenie francuskie a początki religioznawstwa*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Osslińskich.
- TODOROV, V. (1973): On the cosmological sources of early

- historical descriptions. *Works on sign systems*. Nr 6. P. 106-150.
- VENDINA, T. (2022): Old Slavonic language as a modelling factor of Russian culture. *Acta Slavica Japonica*. Vol. 43.
- VOROBIEV, N. (1984): *Fibonacci numbers*. Moscow: Nauka.
- WEBER, M. (1990): *Selected Works*. Moscow: Progress.
- WHITEHEAD, A. (1990): *Selected Works in Philosophy*. Moscow: Progress.
- YACHIN, S. (2010): Language as the basis and universal model of culture. *State, Religion, Church in Russia and Abroad*. Nr 1. P. 14-33.
- ZOLYAN, S. (2018): Towards the Problem of Meaning in Social Semiotics: Max Weber Today. *Slovo.ru. Baltic Accent*. Vol. 9. Nr 4. P. 27-42.

On-line Resources

古汉语中的“劳动”，有何不同. www.chinawriter.com.cn

【每日一字】劳：一分耕耘一分收获 - 来自中央纪委网站

<http://m.codi.gov.cn>

تعريف و معنى العمل في معجم المعاني الجامع - معجم عربي عربي

<https://www.almaany.com> › dict › ar-ar › الع

Internet dictionary "GLAGOL" – <https://perobraz.ru>

Etymological dictionary of the Russian language online –

<https://vasmer.slovaonline.com>

Etymonline – <https://www.etymonline.com>

Quran Surah -110 – <https://quran.com>

労働／ろうどう

語源由来辞典

<https://gogen-yurai.jp> › roud

[Etymology of work by etymonline. Online Etymology Dictionary
https://www.etymonline.com >](https://www.etymonline.com)

[labour | Etymology of labour by etymonline.
Etymonline
https://www.etymonline.com > .](https://www.etymonline.com)