
Urmina, I. A. (2022). Documentary scientific heritage – actual contextual representation. *Culture and Arts in the Context of World Cultural Heritage. Klironomy*, 5, 114–120. Ostrava.

DOI: 10.47451/her2022-05-02

The paper is published in ICI Copernicus, BASE, Zenodo, OpenAIRE, Academic Resource Index ResearchBib, J-Gate, ISI International Scientific Indexing, LORY, LUASA, Google Scholar, eLibrary, Internet Archive.



Irina A. Urmina, Doctor of Cultural Studies, Professor, Faculty of Arts, Russian State Social University. Moscow, Russia.

ORCID 0000-0001-7263-2769

Documentary Scientific Heritage – Actual Contextual Representation

Annotation: The report analyses the process of the heritage model formation as the choice of different generations of different parts of it. The field of scientific knowledge is considered as a set of systematised objective knowledge accumulated by mankind. The role of science is considered, in which rational, i.e., reasonable, true, reliable knowledge of people about the environment and themselves is concentrated, which is intersubjective, can be shared and translated by people in communicative processes. The significance of cultural heritage, including scientific, is also evaluated, which for new generation is only illustrative information that is not related to current life and requires updating, i.e., rational development in order to be used in solving vital tasks for an individual. The problem of reliable and objective interpretation of historical events and circumstances of scientists' activities reflected in the submitted documents, letters, diaries, notes, photographs, etc. is revealed.

Keywords: heritage, historical and cultural heritage, scientific documentary heritage, document, actualisation, social and cultural competence.

Ирина Александровна Урмина, доктор культурологии, профессор, факультет искусств, Российский государственный социальный университет. Москва, Россия.

ORCID 0000-0001-7263-2769

Документальное научное наследие – актуальная контекстная репрезентация

Аннотация: В докладе анализируется процесс формирования модели наследия как выбор разными поколениями разных его частей. Область научного познания рассматривается как совокупность накопленных человечеством систематизированных объективных знаний. Рассматривается роль науки, в которой концентрируется рациональное, то есть обоснованное, достоверное, надежное знание людей об окружении и самих себе, которое интерсубъективно, может разделяться и транслироваться людьми в коммуникативных процессах. Оценивается также значимость культурного наследия, в том числе научного, которое для нового поколения является лишь иллюстративной информацией, не связанной с текущей жизнью и требующей актуализации, то есть рационального освоения с целью использования в решении жизненно важных для индивида задач. Раскрывается проблема достоверного и объективного трактования исторических событий и обстоятельств деятельности учёных, отражённых в представленных документах, письмах, дневниках, заметках, фотографиях и др.

Ключевые слова: наследие, историко-культурное наследие, научное документальное наследие, документ, актуализация, социокультурная компетентность.

Introduction

Heritage as a social and cultural phenomenon can be represented as a process of mastering multidimensional social and cultural experience: a necessary “set” of points of view on the world, world pictures, representations, symbols, traditions, stereotypes and patterns of activity. It should be emphasized that in the context of the classical paradigm of the last century, history as a whole was understood as evolutionary changes with certain “patterns,” presented in the form of multi-link chains of cause-and-effect relationships. The purpose of studying history was to study such patterns, to organise the relevant facts in chronological order. Then the cultural heritage was considered in a cumulative way and represented the totality of all the real objects of the past.

However, modern society cannot be identified with the traditional one, if only because it is heterogeneous in cultural terms. As a result of the intensive stratification of modern society, different social strata, communities, and groups of the population find “their” cultural origins in the heritage, and, accordingly, form “their” traditions and ideas. This stratification raises questions of heritage and continuity in a new way. In fact, in a transforming society, the universalism of the worldview is replaced by a multitude of “pictures” of the universe, the classical definitions of heritage break up into many forms differentiated by different levels of cultural competence of representatives of various social groups. Cultural heritage is perceived by these groups to the extent that certain fragments of it meet the requirements of social significance and thus allow them to adapt in a complex and dynamic social and cultural environment. It should be emphasized that the very concept of “inheritance of culture” was introduced by I.K. Kuchmaeva ([Kuchmaeva, 2006](#)). Social and cultural experience is transformed in accordance with those virtual representations (ideals, ideas, paradigms, representations) that are set by the current social and cultural situation. And the transformed experience is reproduced in new generations. Under these conditions, those fragments of heritage that are perceived through the mechanisms of tradition are able to change their functions, meanings, as a result of which there is a “gap” between their “place” in the structure of heritage and the modern social and cultural situation. The widespread understanding of heritage as a “set of cultural and historical values” in the modern world is becoming insufficient to determine the role of heritage, since it is not possible to formulate the meaning of heritage as a universally shared universal value.

Results

Actualisation of Cultural and Historical Heritage

Actualisation of cultural and historical heritage in general is an activity aimed at preserving and integrating cultural and natural heritage into modern culture by activating the social and cultural role of its tangible and intangible objects, as well as their interpretation. As a phenomenological category, heritage records the results of transmission and inheritance in society of certain objects of the past. In other words, the category is used to distinguish what is evaluated, inherited and transmitted from generation to generation compared to what is forgotten, representing a cultural and value space composed of objects of the past, ordered in

accordance with the selected social and cultural criteria. In modern science, it is considered that the patterns of movement from the past to the future are the “metaphysics of history,” and in reality, there is only a set of theories interpreting the past in relation to solving modern socially significant problems. Then heritage is considered as “traces of the past,” a kind of “construct” indicating the “observer’s position” in retrospect, and history in a certain aspect can be represented as a “constructed chain of being,” ideas about the form and duration of which change over time. There are different approaches to this: e.g., that history moves “in a circle,” or has an irreversible vector development, or each sequence of events is unique. It is also obvious that with any approach, the assignment of “heritage status” to different classes of cultural objects of the past varies depending on ideological, ideological, axiological, and even administrative ideas. Cultural and historical heritage, which undoubtedly includes scientific heritage, is not a simple set of cultural and historical values, the social and cultural experience of previous generations is mastered by the individual in a form transformed by himself in accordance with the ideas that are set by the current social and cultural situation, it is transformed experience that is reproduced in new generations. As a result, different social strata, communities, and population groups find “their” cultural origins in the heritage and, accordingly, form “their” tradition. “The function of its transmission is no longer the main criterion, since all the components of the stratified scheme of the heritage subject are necessary: subjective, objective, functional, dynamic, axiological. The heritage model turns out to be a variable value and really exists as a choice by different generations of its different parts.” (*Selezneva, 2006, pp. 4–11*) The main thing in this process is the meaningful representation of heritage, understanding the significance of those ideas and images that carry different classes of heritage objects.

In fact, we are answering the question: what cultural and historical heritage are we preserving and reviving? The answer to this question, as well as the choice, at the individual level depend on the social and cultural competence of a person, i.e., a set of knowledge and skills that allows you to select, understand, organize information presented in a symbolic form, and successfully use it in solving personal and socially significant group tasks and problems. In the modern virtual information space, this is done by keywords, but the information itself is only illustrative material for real events of the past and present. Such “cognition in images” allows us to interpret the content of the heritage object in different ways.

It should also be remembered that the expansion of the space of mass culture, which began much earlier, under the influence of modern technical and technological capabilities revealed an obvious transformation of the concepts of the significance of cultural heritage, including historical and cultural. “Digital technologies have created unprecedented opportunities for expanding the information space of humanity as a whole and, in addition, have given new opportunities for a new reading of forgotten works that may be consonant with our time and enter the cultural practice of our days.” (*Shapinskaya, 2016*) At the same time, let us recall that in the era of globalization, a new type of social and cultural transformations was formed, which John Naisbit designated as a large-scale transformation of social and cultural interactions “from hierarchy” to “networks,” from the choice of “either-or” to the choice of “and-and,” the formation of the possibility of control over the diversity of social and cultural ties and relationships (*Naisbit, 2003*).

Despite the active use by the modern generation of the cultural environment formed by the mass media from limitless information resources and digital technologies, a person can select in the information field only what corresponds to his own, very limited life experience, that is, what is already mentioned social and cultural competence. It would seem that the modern media space offers the widest opportunities for the active independent development of social and cultural reality by members of society, but modern visual culture has formed specific problems of the use of visual forms and technologies by the new generation, which are sharply different from the existing traditional social and cultural forms and communications and only partially allow them to keep in touch with the experience of previous generations. The fact is that today's mass culture has almost completely become visual, categorically offering ready-made images, largely depriving a person of imagination and the ability to independently form an individual picture of the world—their ideas. Mastering such cliché visual information happens quite easily and quickly, but just as quickly it becomes ineffective for use in real life, since an individual does not master the discrete combinatorial system of our iconic culture—a system of meanings (concepts), the elements of which form new modern concepts, and the basic meanings are not mastered at all. And no discursive practices will help an individual to identify the stable meaning of the perceived environment, it remains ambiguous, requiring additional comprehension when repeated.

Documentary Scientific Heritage – Actualisation and Representation

It is worth emphasising that it is science that is the totality of the systematised objective knowledge accumulated by mankind, with the help of which a person safely masters the environment, extracting meaning from his objective perceptions. In general, even today, the system of scientific knowledge as part of the universal culture preserves the basic meanings due to the parameters—the meanings of the professional words-signs used, since they are included in a stable and reliable semantic context. This is pointed out by Claude Levi-Strauss: “Science is entirely based on the distinction between the accidental and the necessary, which is also a distinction between an event and a structure. The qualities that she defended at her birth as belonging to her, without entering into the experience she was experiencing, remained external and, as it were, alien to events—this is the meaning of the concept of primary qualities.” (*Levi-Strauss, 1994, pp. 126–130*) In the modern information society, the interpretation of meanings and, moreover, their transmutation according to M.K. Petrov (*Petrov, 2004, pp. 72–87*), i.e., the change of meaning that is assimilated by the entire human community in the processes of communications and broadcasts, have become ubiquitous, resulting in false interpretations and their practical application. Ihab Hassan points to the fact that in a situation of multiplicity of meanings, uncertainty of their application, “Immanence... allows a person in conditions of decentering to correlate all reality with himself... Religion and science, myth and technology, intuition and reason, popular and high culture, male and female archetypes... they begin to modify and informatively saturate each other... A new type of consciousness is emerging.” (*Hassan, 1983, pp. 27–28*)

Since one of the functions of heritage is socializing, historical and cultural heritage becomes a real social and cultural fact only if it is mastered, i.e., actualised. But today, all over the world, the actualisation of individual fragments of cultural and historical heritage is carried out not in the traditional form of a consistent transfer of experience, but in the form of selective continuity

of those parts of the heritage that, one way or another, are significant for contemporaries. This also applies to scientific heritage, including documentary. As a rule, the documentary scientific heritage is stored in the archives of either individual scientific organisations or in the joint archives of departmental subordination and contains unique documentary evidence of activities in science, both organisations themselves and outstanding scientists, reflecting their real contribution to science. It is today that the context of a scientific discovery or the life of a scientist becomes especially important, in fact, an actualised historical memory recorded in archival documents, drawings, photographs, books, manuscripts, and other artifacts reflecting the memory of individual scientific events in the life of mankind. The documentary scientific heritage reflects, in fact, the dynamics of human development of the natural environment, the development of the artificial world, the formation of social relations within various fields of science.

It should be emphasised that a document is a symbolic image corresponding to a certain period of time and requiring, in fact, decryption. It is the document containing reliable information about the event or, in our case, the result of scientific activity, the process of scientific discovery, the life circumstances accompanying it, that allows us to highlight the historical and cultural context, the time space of what is happening. Then the detailed, elementary meaning of science as a creative intellectual activity is revealed. The main task then becomes what methods, technologies (including visual ones) to explain, decipher the social and cultural meaning of heritage from the point of view of creating the future. It is unlikely that this can be done effectively or efficiently with words alone—image substitutes or images-substitute meanings.

Clarification of the historical context of the creation of a scientific document makes it possible to use two main functions of texts more effectively: adequate transmission of meanings and generation of new meanings (according to Yu. M. Lotman). “The first function is performed in the best way with the most complete coincidence of the codes of the speaker and the listener and, consequently, with the maximum unambiguity of the text. Considering its second function, the text is presented as a “thinking device,” and its main structural feature is internal heterogeneity.” (*Gavrilova, 2017, p. 27*)

The significance of the scientific documentary heritage, which is located in various archives, for modern generations is only illustrative information that is not used, as a rule, to solve vital tasks related to current life. As already mentioned, from the entire volume of information resources, young people, and the middle generation, can select in the information field only what corresponds to their limited life experience. In fact, knowledge is formed not by a rational education system, but by the mass media and consists of a set of messages randomly snatched from the information flow. However, “visualisation of the text of a historical document is a process of imaginative cognition, in which memory, imagination, thinking and personal meaning participate. Individual documentary sources, such as diaries, letters, drawings or drawings of scientists, often contain creative ideas of researchers, which only competent people can reveal... their task is to help the younger generation in identifying the active meaning of the text hidden in time, its connections, both with the historical environment and with the modern environment—updating this document... the complexity of this task is associated with the widespread... of interactive and multimedia technologies familiar to the younger generation,

which create a short-term effect of interest in the material due to the game effect.” (*Urmina, 2018, p. 54*)

The volume of documentary scientific heritage is huge only in our country (e.g., the scientific potential of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences is 2000 archival funds, including over one million items of storage about the activities of outstanding Russian scientists and scientific institutions), but for younger generations the significance of this wealth is not always clear and it becomes only illustrative information unrelated to real life. And the scientific activity itself is not a priority in terms of success and significance.

Y.M. Lotman, Soviet and Russian literary critic, cultural critic and semiotic, wrote about the document: “Since the end of the 18th century, in an environment of heightened demands for truth in art, the authority of the document has grown rapidly. Pushkin already introduced authentic court documents of that era into Dubrovsky as part of an artistic work.” (*Lotman, 1973, p. 8*) It would seem that the tradition of trust in documents persists today, but there has been a polysemy of interpretations of the same events and factual materials, the appearance of discrepancies and author’s positions concerning many historical events of our time.

All this highlighted a serious problem—the extracts used from historical documentary texts or private assessments of witnesses of these events, by themselves, are interpreted in accordance with the social and cultural competence of researchers of documentary sources. Even researchers studying archival documents cannot always reliably determine the original intentions related to the cultural and historical context of their creation, interpreting the content of texts very freely. The author of the article encountered this when preparing exhibition projects based on authentic documents from the personal archives of Russian scientists of academic level. In the process of preparing expositions, the creative process of scientific work was revealed, while its context, actualized historical scientific and documentary memory became especially important. It should be emphasised that the combination of biographical and historical aspects helps to trace the role of a particular scientist against the background of the general path of developing scientific thought and its significance in the life of society. This is confirmed by the monographic study of the President of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Academician V.L. Komarov activities, in which the authors “tried to avoid personal evaluation conclusions and used only documented facts.” (*Bogatov & Urmina, 2020, p. 443*) It is possible that such an approach will attract modern researchers of historical documentary materials to a deeper theoretical analysis of events in the field of science, which differ in the specifics of human relations at all times.

Conclusion

Is it possible to solve this problem? With the help of what visualization tools, what modern social and cultural technologies, the active meaning of a scientific text document hidden in time can be revealed, its connection is established not only with the historical environment, but also with the modern environment—these tasks are only being set and solved by trial and error. It is only obvious that the widespread use of interactive and multimedia technologies only creates a short-term effect of interest among young people (e.g., in the documentary material exhibited at the exhibition) due to the game effect, but does not activate the imagination and does not stimulate further in-depth study of the thematic area. The position of linguists who claim that “a scientific text has a depersonalised character” (*Gavrilova, 2017, pp. 17–18*) seems interesting,

assuming the absence of direct contact between the author and the reader and allowing us to “control” the recipient’s perception of the contents of an archival scientific document much later than the time of its creation.

But what should be the level of social and cultural competence of those who reveal the authentic meaning of the documentary heritage? As T.M. Dridze notes, “...if the recipient has learned for what purpose the text was generated, what exactly the author wanted to say in addition to all the means used, we can say that he interpreted the text adequately.” (*Gavrilova, 2017, p. 19*). Then, at the same time, how reliable and adequate to real events will the reproduction of the meaning of event-related documents that are in the personal funds of scientists be? The question remains open.

References:

- Bogatov, V. V., & Urmina, I. A. (2020). *Academician Komarov and his time (to the 150th anniversary of the birth of Academician V.L. Komarov)*. Vladivostok: Dalnauka. (In Russ.)
- Gavrilova, A. A. (2017). *Metatext elements in a scientific text*. Saratov: SSEI PRUE named after G.V. Plekhanov. (In Russ.)
- Hassan, I., & Hassan, S. (Eds.). (1983). *Ideas of cultural change. Innovation/Renovation. New Perspectives on the Humanities*. Madison.
- Kuchmaeva, I. K. (2006). *Social patterns and mechanisms of cultural inheritance*. Moscow: GASK. (In Russ.)
- Lotman, Y. M. (1973). *Semiotics of cinema and problems of cinema aesthetics*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat. (In Russ.)
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1994). *Untamed thought / Primitive thinking*. Moscow: Republic. (In Russ.)
- Naisbit, J. (2003). *Megatrends*. Moscow: AST. (In Russ.)
- Petrov, M. K. (2004). *Language, sign, culture*. Moscow: Editorial URSS. (In Russ.)
- Selezneva, E. N. (2006). Cultural heritage in the context of macro-historical dynamics. *Observatory of Culture: journal-review*, 5, 4-11. (In Russ.)
- Shapinskaya, E. N. (2016). Culture in the Era of “numbers”: transformation of cultural forms and aesthetic values. *International Magazine “Media. Information. Communication”*, 19. (In Russ.). <http://mic.org.ru/vyp/19-nomer-2016/kultura-v-epokhu-tsifry-transformatsiya-kulturnykh-form-i-esteticheskikh-tsennostey>
- Urmina, I. A. (2018). Actualization of the documentary scientific heritage in museum and exhibition activities. *Collection based on the results of the conference “Documentary Heritage of Russia: Problems of Theory and Practice. To the 100th Anniversary of the State Archival Service of Russia: Proceedings of the Scientific and Practical Conference”*, 54-60. Moscow. Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences. (In Russ.)