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Niko Chavchavadze on culture, values and aesthetics¹

Vladimer Luarsabishvili
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9510-5080
New Vision University – Tbilisi – Georgia
University of La Frontera – Temuco – Chile
vluarsabishvili@newvision.ge

Abstract

My purpose in this paper is to introduce some ideas of Georgian philosopher Niko Chavchavadze to a large audience. In particular, I focus on three issues: the complex structure of culture and the necessity of its definition; different types of values as basic components of culture; and Aesthetic as a specific form of reflecting reality. In relating these concerns to the ideas of Donald R. Kelly regarding the necessity of defining the nature of culture, as well as to the theories of values of Geert Hofstede and Shalom Schwartz, I indicate how Chavchavadze's definitions and characterizations of the above-mentioned concepts anticipate contemporary approaches to these questions. In conclusion, I describe the current significance of Chavchavadze's ideas and their possible role in the formation of civic society.

Keywords: Niko Chavchavadze, culture, values, Aesthetics

Introduction

Probably the first attempts of the use of philosophical methods were made when the early man tried to imagine the origin and organization of the universe, followed by a desire to discover a proper place in that imagined world. From this time, philosophical inquiry was converted into an indispensable part of a human nature. Social cohesion and interpersonal communication resulted in formation of cultures to which philosophy offered a basis and culture, for its part, provided own characteristics for the philosophical perception of the world.

Philosophy as a constituent part of the human being has been evaluated from different perspectives during a long history of mankind. It has found its place in distinct domains of human thought including, but not limited to, history, education, politics,

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healthcare, and culture. In each case, philosophy performed an important role in developing of human activity, enriched it with diverse possibilities and, at the same time, became subjected to major changes. Thus, the bidirectional relation between philosophy and other spheres of human life was established, reflected in the formation of different disciplines, such as history of philosophy and philosophy of history, political philosophy, philosophy of healthcare, philosophy of education, and philosophy of culture. The latter includes not only the evaluation of philosophical basis of culture, but also the investigation of the inner relation between different philosophical systems based on the cultural peculiarities of a society, ethnic group or a nation. From this point of view, the notion of *philosophical culture* is of particular importance.

Defined as philosophers' range of interest (teaching, investigation, and debating on philosophical questions), *philosophical culture* can be considered as a phenomenon which possesses the nature of being *glocal*: its omnipresence is evident and its glocalization is observed through the interaction between the Western tradition of cultivation of philosophical thought and a plurality of what is called 'different philosophies', such as "Chinese", "Indian", etc. (Van der Zweerde, 2018). The above-mentioned demonstrates the relation between history and philosophy (the formation of different philosophical systems in concrete historical context[2]) and the role of history in the development of philosophy (using different contexts as a material for philosophical analysis).[3]

Concrete historical, socio-political, and cultural situation plays a crucial role in the formation of philosophical systems (Van der Zweerde, 2010), that is demonstrated in case of Soviet *philosophical culture* which shares characteristics with other *philosophical cultures* and, at the same time, tries "to combine, or reconcile, the idea of a single philosophical truth with a full recognition of the plurality of philosophical traditions" (Van der Zweerde, 2018: 362-363). The same can be applied to Georgian Soviet *philosophical culture*, formed during the years of Soviet occupation.

Research has rich experience being housed either by universities (in Western Europe) or by academies of sciences (in Eastern Europe).[4] In Soviet Russia, the Academy of Sciences was formed by different research institutions, such as the Institute of Philosophy; the same model was applied in case of Georgian SSR.[5] Almost all Georgian philosophers worked at

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[2] On this topic, see: Scharf, R.C. (2014). How History Matters to Philosophy. New York and London: Routledge.

[3] On this topic, see: Munslow, A. (2012). A History of History. New York and London: Routledge.

[4] On the diverse traditions of housing research in different countries, see the article by Armando Alcántara Santuario (Alcántara, 2000).

[5] The history of the Institute of Philosophy of the Georgian Academy of Sciences dates back to the year 1944 when the Section of Philosophy was founded in the Institute of History. After two years, the section was transformed into an institute. The first director of the newly formed institute, Petre Sharia, was removed in 1948 and Savle Tsereteli was appointed. In 1953, Prof. Tsereteli was removed for writing the monograph titled *For the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the logical*. In 1957 he was re-appointed to the same position. Niko Chavchavadze participated actively in this process. Till the death of Prof. Tsereteli in 1966, Prof. Chavchavadze was deputy-head of the institute. On the history of the Institute of Philosophy of Georgian SSR, see the edition of Ilia State University *The 1946-1991 soviet period archive materials of Savle Tsereteli Institute of Philosophy*, 2 volumes, edited by Mery Tsutskiridze, Tbilisi: Ilia State University Press, 2017.

the Institute of Philosophy of the Georgian Academy of Sciences; some of them also lectured at Tbilisi State University. Shalva Nutsubidze, Niko Chavchavadze, Givi Margvelashvili, Zurab Kakabadze, Tamaz Buachidze, to mention just a few, represent an interesting circle of thinkers who worked on and analyzed different aspects of human cultural and intellectual life, but were destined to remain unknown to foreign colleagues, apart from a very limited number. As their ideas were formed in specific geographical and historical contexts different from western ones, I think that the study of their work may be of paramount importance in imagining the paths of development of basic human ideas in different contexts.

Niko Chavchavadze

Niko Chavchavadze (1923-1997) was a Georgian philosopher and public figure.[6] After fighting in World War II, he studied philosophy at Tbilisi State University and worked as a fellow at the Institute of Philosophy. Public activity was a part of the young philosopher's character, which became evident in his fight for the reappointment of Professor Savle Tsereteli as the director of the Institute. Later, after the death of Prof. Tsereteli, Chavchavadze was appointed as the director. From this moment onwards, the *philosophy of culture* became the main research topic of investigation conducted in the Institute. In the very center of the ideologized Soviet philosophical system, subjected to censorship and influenced by "official" philosophical culture of the USSR, populated by a newly created Soviet intelligentsia" (Van der Zweerde, 2018: 365), Chavchavadze had managed to create a friendly and professional ambience for philosophical research. He invited prominent Georgian philosophers to work at the institute, including Merab Mamardashvili (from Moscow), Mamia Bakanidze (from Alma-Ata), Givi Margvelashvili, Rezi Tvaradze, academician Angia Bochorishvili (who was forced to leave the Institute of Psychology and moved to the Institute of Philosophy along with the entire department), and even the dissident Tamar Chkheidze. Newly formed groups of researchers started to investigate the philosophical problems of man, culture and values. This period is described by Teimuraz Mtibelashvili, a member of the Institute, in the following way:

> Late period of the Georgian philosophy of culture can't be reviewed without mentioning **Niko Chavchavadze's** (1923-1997) merit in its development. He was not only a famous philosopher and researcher, but also a big public figure who had broad interests. His merit is mainly connected to the period when he was a director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences which was the most important center for studying the problem of philosophy of culture. He worked in the institute from the second part of the 1960s until his death in 1997. At his initiative and with the help of leading specialists of the institute, at the end of the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s the priorities of research activity of the institute became philosophical anthropology, culture and value. It was considered that their study was the

most important and useful method for the development of this field"
(Mtibelashvili, 2003, 424).

Niko Chavchavadze is the author of monographs *For the Methodology of Aesthetics*
(Tbilisi, 1977, in Georgian), *The Issues of Aesthetics* (Tbilisi, 2007, in Georgian), *For the
Nature of the Subject of Aesthetics* (Tbilisi, 2007, in Georgian), and *Culture and Values*
(*Kultura i Tsennosti*, Tbilisi, 2007, in Russian). My main goal in this essay is to evaluate
Chavchavadze's philosophical thought regarding *culture*, *values* and *aesthetics*. These terms
are important for the understanding of the discipline of *Culture Studies*;[7] nevertheless, the
notions which I am discussing in this article are still valid for a broad range of cultural
understandings and definitions which may be applicable for both social and biomedical
sciences.[8]

I shall discuss three main approaches to my goal. First, I shall show that
Chavchavadze's understanding of the notion of *culture* is complex – on the one hand, it
reveals the necessity of definition of *culture* and, on the other, indicates the role of human
action in the formation of culture. Second, I shall review Chavchavadze's definition of values
and their types and role in the formation of society. Third, I shall indicate that according to
Chavchavadze, *aesthetic* demonstrates man's attitude towards reality and that the value of
aesthetics is by nature a spiritual value.

In addressing these concerns, I shall connect Chavchavadze's thought with some
ideas expressed on the same topic by Donald R. Kelley related to the necessity of defining
the nature of *culture* (Kelley, 1996). The aim of this comparison is to observe the encounter
(similarity) between different philosophical cultures – Western tradition of philosophy
(global) and Georgian philosophical tradition (local). Chavchavadze's classification of
values (*means as values* and *goals as values*) and their relation with individualism is in the
same vein of Hofstede's (1984) and Schwartz's (1992) theories of values. In addition, he
explores *spiritual values*, which are necessary for the formation of an ideal society. In the
era of globalization and localization (Van der Zweerde, 2010), spiritual values may play an
important role not only in the survival of cultural peculiarities in a multicultural society but
also in further development of cultures which come in contact with the modern world of
massive urbanization, migration and communication.

What is culture?

Historically, when scientists try to define a new discipline, they usually start the
description from the perspective of similarities and differences; in other words, defining

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[7] Especially in the field of cultural history (Huizinga 1972), semiotics of culture (Lotman 1990), anthropological
and ethnographical studies of culture (Frazer 1986), cultural politics [Baker 1987; Lucas 1988; Hoak 1995
(including cultural nationalism (Leersen 2006)], cultural psychology (Cole 1996), the culture of literacy
(Godzich 1998), cultural archeology (Morris 2000), cultural sociology (Alexander 2003), cultural geography
(Duncan Johnson and Schein 2004), philosophy of culture (Cassirer 2005), and cultural rhetoric (Albaladejo
2013, 2016).
[8] Being by nature multidisciplinary, contemporary research frequently uses different methodological
approaches; for instance, social sciences inform biomedical research (Wolf, 2018), and vice versa (Kippax, Holt
& Friedman, 2011).

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something means the acceptance and/or rejection of characteristics which constitute a new discipline. This was the case with Karl Lamprecht[9] and Peter Burke[10] when they tried to define "cultural history"; another example is the definition of "cultural revolution" (in Ancient Greece and Rome (Habinek and Schiesaro, 1997; Osborne, 2007; Wallace-Hadril, 2008), Russia both of Peter the Great (Cracraft, 2004) and later (Transchel, 2006), or Mexico (Vaughan and Lewis, 2006)). Thus, the concept of *culture* represented complex and diverse meanings throughout the centuries, and from here arose the need to define it.

Almost 70 years separate us from the historical edition of the book authored by Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, representing an attempt to define culture;[11] more than 150 different definitions could not cover the multifaceted and complex nature of culture. Probably, the main difficulty of definition is conditioned by different understanding of the notion: human history possesses a rich tradition of explaining culture, such as culture as a sum of specific actions in antiquity, the *cultura animi* distinguished by Cicero or *Cultura Christianae Religiones* defined by patristics or *cultura ingenii* defended by Erasmus of Rotterdam and Thomas More. From the second part of the seventeenth century, *culture* is defined as an expression of joint activities of society, referring to both everyday and more abstract (science and art) action (Welsch 2008). Contemporary philosophers still consider the issue important and offer different approaches for the definition of the notion (Monfort Prades 2010).

According to Chavchavadze, the understanding of *culture* is different in philosophical and social disciplines. For social sciences, *culture* is a phenomenon that express human action. Meanwhile, for philosophy, it is presented as an explanation of man's inner world, as a main idea of his action. Here lies the difficulty of defining *culture* based on the study of its nature as well as on comparative studies of different cultures. Only in case of definition of *culture*, it may be understood as a set of the values shared by concrete society (Chavchavadze, 2007a, p. 16-17).

Chavchavadze placed emphasis on the necessity of human action to form culture; he defined the action as being of *material-real* and of *ideal* nature. *Material-real* is a set of actions that are related with everyday life and with the main functions of man. The *ideal* nature of the human action is determined by more abstract peculiarities of humans which are less connected with material or concrete human (Chavchavadze, 2007a, p. 40). Both types of actions play a central role in the development of society as they participate in the realization of social functions related to everyday (material-real) and/or non-material (more abstract/ideal) necessities. This indicates the need to study cultural histories – as Peter Burke argued, "Almost everything seems to be having its cultural history written these days", including cultural histories of calendars, causality, climate, coffee-houses, corsets, examinations, facial hair, fat, fear, impotence, insomnia, masturbation, nationalism, pregnancy, and tobacco (Burke, 2010, p. 480). With this bewildering variety of approaches, detailed and comparative analysis of societies' preferences (values) in concrete historical

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[9] *Die kulturhistorische Methode*, Berlin, 1990.
[10] *What is Cultural History*? 2nd edition, Cambridge: Polity, 2009.
[11] Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 1952.

context may throw light upon modern social processes. Donald R. Kelley indicates the importance of shifting the term *culture* from an individual to a social level and notes that it formed "[...] a way of indicating levels of civilization and judging 'which people may be judged to be barbaric and which cultivated" (Kelley, 1996, p. 101).

Chavchavadze's idea of analyzing culture from a comparative perspective aims to detect cultural peculiarities which are at the same time universal and society-specific. And comparison as an instrument may be based on the idea that cultural ideas which form values do not exist in an identical form. I go back to Kelly and connect his ideas of shifting *culture* from an individual to a social level with the understanding of social world offered by Burrell and Morgan (1979). According to them, *ontological assumptions* of social reality address the question either from the perspective of external factors or from the point of view of individual consciousness; *epistemological assumptions* seek to understand the basis of knowledge (its nature and forms); another set of assumptions describe the relationship between humans and their environment; and the last type is *methodological assumptions*. If we try to understand *culture* and to explain its peculiarities in the framework of social sciences, obviously we shall have to take into consideragtion the social functions of humans. Chavchavadze develops this line of argument further seeing *culture* as a social phenomenon and tries to analyze social characteristics of human action, its totality, i.e. *external* and *internal* factors which may explain and govern social relationships. In highlighting the relations between two types of factors, Chavchavadze indicates the role of human action in the development of society. Hence, *culture* may be considered not a static sum of knowledge, belief or art but a dynamic structure subjected to changes according to concrete forms of social relationship.

Another model offered by the Georgian philosopher is to consider a *culture* as a part of a philosophical framework--as a result of a realization of man's inner world, ideas and intentions. *Positivist* or *Relativist* approaches to nature may reveal the basic understanding of the world: either it exists and is knowable as it really is, or its reception differs from one individual to another. In both cases, *culture* is a philosophical product that may be studied by abstract peculiarities of human action, less connected with the difficulties of day-to-day living.

Chavchavadze's idea about the necessity of defining *culture* is still found in the very center of philosophical reflection. Today *culture* is defined as a "result of historical practice", as a "systemic complex structure", or as a "unity of institutions" (Monfort Prades, 2010). When we try to define *culture,* we intend to come close to its complex nature, marked by different historical epochs and time contexts. Literature, Rhetoric, Translation, Philosophy and other disciplines reflect the cultural diversity of societies, ethnic groups and/or nation-states, offering different methodological possibilities for the reconstruction of culture. Chavchavadze's idea of conceptualizing *culture* as a social and philosophical phenomenon allows us to interpret cultural peculiarities as possibilities to realize man's social function. The methodological novelty offered by Chavchavadze is based on the above-mentioned assumption: man's *cultural* characteristics are indivisible and their appearance and/or realization should be explicit. In other words, the interaction of different human possibilities

(social engagement and individual spiritual formation) facilitates the development of culture.

What are values?

When Chavchavadze developed the idea of the understanding of *culture* as a social and philosophical phenomenon and indicated the necessity of its definition, he realized the importance of different understandings of the notion of *culture*. This acceptance, or acceptances, according to Willem Frijhoff consists of a minimum of three parts: *current acceptance*, or the equivalence between *culture* and *high culture*, *socio-cultural acceptance*, or the set of values elaborated by a social group, and *anthropological acceptance*, or the set of acts which produce expressions, words, forms, relations, etc. (Frijhoff, 1986). Based on the concrete type of *understanding*, *culture* may be classified as *technical, practical*, or *ideal* (San Martín, cited in Monfort Prades, 2010, pp. 135-136). Each of the types mentioned are supported by a corresponding sort of *values*.

Values are universal characteristics shared by society in concrete social and temporal contexts. Being structured in a universal way in different cultural groups, values may carry conflicting or compatible features, crucial for explaining social composition, orientation and change (Weber, 1958; Durkheim, 1964). Four famous theories about cultural dimensions of values are recognized today as main approaches for the study of values: Triandis demonstrates that the dimensions of individualism and collectivism should be combined with equality or inequality in social relations (Triandis, 1995); Inglehart considers that cultural change may be explained taking into consideration the dimensions of Materialism-Postmaterialism and Modernization-Postmodernization (Inglehart, 1998); Hofstede composed a theory of the structure of values taking into consideration four main factors (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity and individualism/collectivism), (Hofstede, 1984), and Schwartz's Theory of Basic Values unites six main features (values are beliefs; values refer to desirable goals; values transcend specific actions and situations; values serve as standards or criteria; values are ordered by importance; the *relative* importance of multiple values guides actions (Schwartz, 1992).

As Chavchavadze put it, *values* refer to what people strive for either as their goal or as the means of achieving the goal. Philosophers, according to the author, try to study culture putting values in the very center of research. These actions need to make the distinction between *values* and *signs* in order to avoid confusion as values are part of *object*. *Values* mean that something is valuable for somebody, which distinguishes them from *signs* or *objects*. The peculiarities of objects depend on an object itself but values do not depend on material existence or non-existence of objects. What makes values by their nature very human is that values' area of activity is culture and social reality, both of them being products of human activity. Values cannot be characteristic of natural appearances (Chavchavadze, 2007a, pp. 18-22). Chavchavadze coincides in this line with Schwartz (1992), who indicates *Conservation* as one of the main characteristics of societies, with traditions, security and conformity in the very center of social life. Social life determines the formation and dissemination of values which do not contrast with accepted social norms.

Chavchavadze distinguishes *means as values* and *goals as values* (Chavchavadze, 2007a, p. 40). The first are contingent by nature. The second belong to concrete individuals whose goal is to strive for supreme values. By their nature, supreme *goals as values* cannot be only relative and subjective, realized by concrete individuals. The same ideas are found in Hofstede, who underlines the role of *individualism* in the formation of independence and autonomy with respect to groups and/or organizations. *Individualism* from this perspective is opposed to *collectivism*, which gives more importance to the organizational mode of development of society (Hofstede, 1984). Chavchavadze advances here as he not only indicates the role of individualism in the formation of a free person but also demonstrates his ability to achieve supreme values. According to Chavchavadze, supreme *goals as values* contain absolute and objective elements as well. Through the dialectics of absolute and relative, it is possible to determine epochal and eternal values. That which possesses epochal importance or is valuable in a concrete period contains universal values that transcendend the concrete period. Such value is absolute and it can lay the foundation for several achievements of ideal conditions in the development of human culture. It is a final and ideal level of human existence, and cultural society should strive to reach it. Human striving toward absolute values will be brought out during the study of man's aesthetic attitude toward reality.

Based on their nature, Chavchavadze divides values into *material* and *spiritual*. Once an object meets a man's vital demands, it is considered a material value, and when it means a man's highest spiritual demands it is a spiritual nature. Spiritual values belong to a higher category:

> The classification of values is conditional because empirically a man's vital and spiritual demands are not differentiated from one another. They are usually combined. Anyway, a man's vital demands are not primitive demands. Public life made them soft and human and thus, included elements of spiritual demands in it. (For instance, a man doesn't eat meat first of all because it is immoral and then, because it is physiologically unacceptable and abhorrent). Nevertheless, however combined material and spiritual demands are, they are still demands of different categories. This difference is shown by the concepts of material and spiritual culture. They are parts of one culture. Material and spiritual cultures differentiate only in abstraction. However, nobody mixes them up. While the concept of material culture refers to everything that is created by a man to meet his material demands, the concept of spiritual culture refers to everything that is created to meet a man's spiritual demands (Chavchavadze, 2007a, 167).

Chavchavadze's understanding of the functions and the role of *values* makes it possible to distinguish two main spheres of human action: common or general, related to the everyday life challenges, and individual or particular, directed toward the realization of the supreme goals. Despite the fact that they are inseparable and exist in a combined way, both possess peculiar characteristics. The latter is especially observable when the reality is received and interpreted in an *aesthetic* way.

How does Chavchavadze relate *values* to *aesthetics*? According to him, a man's striving for absolute values will be brought out when we investigate man's aesthetic attitude toward reality. From here we derive the necessity of understanding the nature of aesthetics, which is a perception of human activities in all fields, including art and real life.

What is Aesthetics?

As Władisław Tatarkiewicz indicated in his famous book,[12] the term *aesthetics* is probably of Greek origin and is related with *thought*, having the equivalent in medieval Latin of *sensatio* and *intellectus*. Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury[13] and Francis Hutcheson[14] published works that may be considered the first attempts in philosophical aesthetics. After ten years, the word *aesthetics* was introduced by the German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten with a different meaning: he identified *cognition sensitiva*, or *sensitive knowledge* as the knowledge about *beauty*, describing it with the Greco-Latin expression *cognitio aesthetica*. When David Bond Stout described *Aesthetics*, he was "referring to the branch of philosophy dealing with the beautiful, chiefly with respect to theories of the essential character of the beautiful and the tests by which the beautiful may be judged" (Stout, cited in Jopling, 1971, p. 30). His definition is closely connected with the understanding of the notion offered by art historian Babatunde Lawal: "aesthetics deals with the philosophy of the beautiful as well as with the standards of value in judging art and other aspects of human life and culture" (Lawal 1974, p. 239).[15] From this moment, *Aesthetics* appears in the center of philosophical reflection,[16] occupying certain space in philosophical research.[17]

According to Chavchavadze, throughout history it has been noted many times that "art and aesthetics are a mixture of sensuous and numinous (Plato, Hegel), or unity of freedom and obligation (Kant), or unity of consciousness and unconscious (Schelling), or it doesn't reflect only senses, but also ideas (Plekhanov against Tolstoy) and etc." (Chavchavadze, 2007a, p. 31). As Chavchavadze put it, all that is aesthetic is valuable. Here he distinguishes the meanings of "useful" and "aesthetic," placing special emphasis on the fact that something may be *useful* for an individual or for the whole family. Meanwhile, the notion of *aesthetics* cannot be used in its utilitarian sense as the value of aesthetics is a spiritual value (Chavchavadze, 2007a, p. 175).

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[12] Tatarkiewicz, W. (1980), *A History of Six Ideas: An Essay in Aesthetics,* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

[13] Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of. *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

[14] *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004.

[15] On the topic of defining *aesthetics* in anthropological literature, see Van Damme, Wilfried (1991), "Some notes of defining aesthetics in the anthropological literature", *JASO,* 22/2, pp.167-181.

[16] See *Naturalizing Aesthetics* (edited by Ewa Chudoba and Krystyna Wilkoszewska), Krakow: Wydawnictwo LIBRON – Filip Lohner, 2015.

[17] Classical works on the topic belong to David Hume, Thomas Reid and Adam Smith, Alexander Gerard, George Turnbull and Lord Kames. An interesting article about Aesthetics as a normative science is authored by Gordon Graham: Graham, Gordon (2014), "Aesthetics as a Normative Science", *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement,* 75, pp. 249-264.

Chavchavadze noted that aesthetic subject has a twofold structure: front and back. The first one is perceptible and sensuous, and gives opportunity for aesthetic appraisal. It has in-sensuous deep content which makes aesthetic perception different from universal perception. The second consists of all attitudes and connections that a man has towards the reality (Chavchavadze, 2007b, pp. 20-21). Chavchavadze deepens the ideas of his precursors and underlines the role of aesthetic subject in the formation of society. As the value of aesthetic is a spiritual value, only individuals can condition its formation and further development. Values cultivated by such individuals are the product of a man's reception of reality and his response to it. The reception and the response to the surrounding reality are called an *action* – the connection of *culture* with *action* is not accidental: Chavchavadze detects the role of *action* in the development of *culture* and the role of the latter in the processing of the former.

Conclusions

The definition of material-real actions and ideal-nature actions facilitate the understanding of concrete human needs and indicate their place in the development of different cultures. From here we see the necessity of studying cultures in comparison. As Barker put it, *cultural studies* form an important and novel field of research in the humanities (Barker, 2000), and according to Burke numerous studies are conducted to define *culture* (Burke, 2014). Trying to investigate culture from a philosophical perspective, Chavchavadze aimed to discover the peculiarities of values and their composition and patterns which make them valuable. According to him, values are inseparable from culture and from social life as they are the product of human activity. They appear to be so important in the modern world that the notion of *cultural mobility* was coined; as Greenblatt put it, "There is an urgent need to rethink fundamental assumptions about the fate of culture in an age of global mobility, a need to formulate, both for scholars and for the larger public, new ways to understand the vitally important dialectic of cultural persistence and change. This dialectic is not only a function of triumphant capitalism, free trade, and globalization; it is, as we hope to show, a much older phenomenon" (Greenblatt, 2010, pp. 1-2). When Chavchavadze tried to define the role of epochal and eternal values he aimed to point out the possibility of the development of human culture in different conditions.

Urbanization creates new societies (Ramis Cirer, 2011; Montosa Muñoz, 2013), migration connects nations (Vidal Ortiz, 2013; Beatriz Slooten, 2014; Carballo de la Riva, 2017), conditions the dissemination of cultural ideas[18] and contributes to the foundation and development of different fields of sciences.[19] During these processes the reception of reality may be changed and distinctly estimated. In changed reality, aesthetics may play an important role in the understanding of what is valuable for modernity and also in the formation or transformation of cultural values. As Tony Bennett argues, "From the late 1920s through the 1930s and into the 1940s, the relations between the aesthetic conception of the pattern of culture, its spatial coordinates and its malleability came to inform a

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[18] As it was in case of the stay of Franz Boas at the Escuela de Altos Estudios in Mexico where he introduced the ideas of *cultural relativism* (Salmerón, 1998).
[19] As it was in case of the stay of Frondizi in Argentina (Salmerón, 1991).

programme in which cultural planners, guided by anthropologists, were to regulate the conditions in which American society would creatively transform itself by absorbing immigrant cultures in an assimilationist logic which focused exclusively on the relations between different periods of European migration" (Bennett, 2015: 559).

To summarize, in Chavchavadze's understanding, *culture, values* and *aesthetics* are links in the same chain; *culture* is a sum result of human activity presented in a variety of forms such as systems of values, norms, etc. (from the perspective of social sciences), or an expression of man's inner world (from the philosophical perspective). In both cases, *culture* is defined as a set of values shared by concrete society and is based on its nature (i.e. different types of *values* which can form it (*material* or *spiritual*)). *Values* are the main components of *culture* and reflect man's vital and highest spiritual demands, which belong to the field of *aesthetics* due to their nature of being valuable. Chavchavadze connects the *culture* with *action*, describing on the one hand, the role of *culture* in everyday life and, on the other, the role of *action* in the development of *culture*. Thus, the relation between *culture* and *action* seems to be by nature bidirectional, when one variable determines the existence and the development of another. The external characteristics of society, such as material or technical peculiarities are subjected to dramatic changes, but the inner composition of the main nature of man remains constant and stable. Aesthetic approaches to the definition of human actions is one of the main backgrounds that can define the main role of values in the formation, development and survival of cultures and societies.

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