

Ethical and Socio-Cultural Problems of the Development of Cultural Practices of Humanity: Primitiveness, Ancient Civilizations, Modernity

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Research Article

DOI:

[10.70651/3041-248X/2026.3.23](https://doi.org/10.70651/3041-248X/2026.3.23)

Received:

17 February 2026

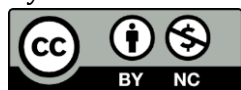
Accepted:

21 March 2026

Published online:

25 March 2026

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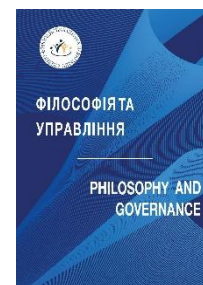
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Sociocultural transformations of humanity. We will do this through the prism of the evolution of cultural practices, from primitive animistic systems to the modern challenges of the era of global digitalization and artificial intelligence. The material of the article is presented using a synthesis of methods of retrospective analysis, the historical-typological method and the semiotics of culture. This approach made it possible to trace the genesis of ethical regulators as complex sign-symbolic systems, and not only products of technological progress. The need to deconstruct the concept of primitiveness in relation to human communities of primitive culture is emphasized. It is argued that the cultural practices of that time, in particular rock painting and ritual actions, served as tools of ethical mediation with the environment. Under such circumstances, animals, plants and landscape elements were perceived as full-fledged subjects of interspecific cultural interaction. This worldview field, described through the prism of the “new animism”, allows us to consider primitiveness as a system of a different complexity, free from the rigid dualism of subject-object. Next, we focused on the analytical coverage of the “Neolithic revolution” and the emergence of the first ancient civilizations. It is noted that the transition to a reproducing economy, urban planning and monumental architecture marked the formation of qualitatively new social hierarchies. Writing, legal systems and specialization of labor appear as mechanisms for legitimizing the power of elites. At the same time, this led to the psychological alienation of man from nature and the formation of a technological veil of civilization. The paper substantiates the thesis about the inertia of civilizational progress. The modern crisis of trust in institutions, ecological degradation and moral vacuum in the field of artificial intelligence are direct consequences of the unconscious reproduction of Neolithic models of aggression. It is determined that overcoming modern value disorientation requires not only technological, but primarily ethical reflection. It should be based on the integration of historical experience of universal significance and empathy. Retrospective analysis of primitive taboos and rituals, considered as ancient mechanisms of responsibility towards non-human subjects, can serve as a source for the formulation of modern ethical guidelines.

KEYWORDS

animism, ancient civilizations, “Neolithic revolution”, new animism, primitive culture, sociogenesis, modernity, artificial intelligence.



Етичні і соціокультурні проблеми розвитку культурних практик людства: первісність, давні цивілізації, сучасність

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СТАТТЯ

АНОТАЦІЯ

Дослідницяка

DOI:

[10.70651/3041-248X/2026.3.23](https://doi.org/10.70651/3041-248X/2026.3.23)

Отримана:

17.02.2026 р.

Прийнята:

21.03.2026 р.

Опублікована:

25.03.2026 р.

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У статті проведено міждисциплінарний огляд етичних та соціокультурних трансформацій людства. Це зроблено крізь призму еволюції культурних практик, від первісних анімістичних систем до сучасних викликів доби глобальної цифровізації та штучного інтелекту. Матеріал статті викладено за допомогою синтезу методів ретроспективного аналізу, історико-типологічного методу та семіотики культури. Такий підхід дозволив простежити генезу етичних регуляторів як складних знаково-символічних систем, а не лише продуктів технологічного прогресу. Наголошено на необхідності деконструкції концепту примітивності стосовно людських спільнот первісної культури. Аргументовано, що культурні практики того часу, зокрема наскельний живопис та ритуальні дії, слугували інструментами етичної медіації з довкіллям. За таких обставин тварини, рослини та елементи ландшафту сприймалися як повноправні суб'єкти міжвидової культурної взаємодії. Це світоглядне поле, описане через призму «нового анімізму», дозволяє розглядати первісність як систему іншої складності, вільну від жорсткого дуалізму суб'єкт-об'єкт. Далі ми зосередилися на аналітичному висвітленні «неолітичної революції» та виникнення перших давніх цивілізацій. Зазначено, що перехід до відтворюючого господарства, міського планування та монументальної архітектури ознаменував формування якісно нових соціальних ієрархій. Писемність, правові системи та спеціалізація праці постають як механізми легітимізації влади еліт. Водночас, це призвело до психологічного відчуження людини від природи та формування технологічної залежності цивілізації. У роботі обґрунтовано тезу про інерційність цивілізаційного поступу. Сучасна криза довіри до інституцій, екологічна деградація та моральний вакуум у сфері штучного інтелекту є прямими наслідками несвідомого відтворення неолітичних моделей агресії. Визначено, що для подолання сучасної ціннісної дезорієнтації необхідна не лише технологічна, а насамперед етична рефлексія. Вона має спиратися на інтеграцію історичного досвіду загальнозначущості та співпереживання. Ретроспективний аналіз первісних табу та ритуалів, розглянутих як давні механізми відповідальності перед нелюдськими суб'єктами, може слугувати джерелом для формування сучасних етичних орієнтирів. Обґрунтовується ідея цифрового анімізму, що висувається як потенційна стратегія гармонізації відносин між людиною, техногенним середовищем та штучним інтелектом. Акцентовано, що розуміння історичних закономірностей соціогенезу дозволяє подолати архаїчну інерцію мислення та сприяє розробці етичних регуляторів, здатних мінімізувати ризики дегуманізації у контексті глобалізованої віртуалізації соціальної реальності.



КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

анімїзм, давні цивілізації, «неолітична революція», новий анімїзм, первісна культура, сучасність, штучний інтелект.

1. Introduction

The choice of the topic of the article is due not only to scientific interest, but also to the urgent practical need of modern society to create new ethical guidelines that would meet modern challenges. This is especially important in conditions of war, reduced trust in institutions, information overload and the growing influence of virtual technologies on the formation of consciousness. Globalization and digitalization, of which we are witnesses and participants, significantly change established social relations, creating the need to rethink the methods of ethical influence through various cultural practices. The concept of “cultural practices” opens up the opportunity for a thorough study of individual behavior in various socio-cultural contexts. It encompasses a complex complex of value-semantic guidelines, a system of sign-symbolic elements, methods of communication and artistic aspects of everyday life. As G. Mednikova points out, not a change in ideas or ideals, but primarily the emergence of new cultural practices can be considered a determining factor in the birth of new meanings and the transition to new historical eras. For example, Charlemagne’s introduction of innovative educational practices became the driving force behind the Carolingian Renaissance, which significantly transformed the cultural and social landscape of Europe. Subsequently, the introduction of Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew in universities in Italy in the 14th century played an important role in the translation of the works of ancient philosophers, including Plato. This led to their active discussion in various intellectual circles, stimulating the development of debating practices and the creation of intellectual circles and communities. Such developments contributed to the formation of new ideas about man and his place in the world, laying the foundations for the further evolution of cultural thought [11, p. 165].

As follows from the examples given, any transformation of the ways of human activity inevitably interacts with the moral norms dominant in a particular era. Such interaction can lead to the destruction of outdated ethical dogmas or require the formation of fundamentally new regulatory mechanisms. But if, say, in the times of Antiquity or the Renaissance, such processes lasted for centuries, then modernity, marked by local and global military conflicts and the rapid development of digital technologies, demonstrates a dizzyingly rapid change in cultural practices. This dynamic often creates a dangerous moral vacuum, which requires a special research approach for its critical understanding.

To better understand the architectonics of this process, it is necessary to carry out a retrospective analysis of the problem. The dynamics of the relationship between socio-cultural challenges and moral norms cannot be understood without studying the fundamental stages of human development. That is why we focus on three main stages of human history. In primitive times, the first socio-cultural taboos were formed. The period of ancient civilizations was marked, among other things, by ethical norms through legal and religious institutions. In modern times, cultural practices have been transferred from the physical dimension to the realm of virtual reality and artificial intelligence (AI). Such a comparative approach will not only help identify historical patterns, but also help find value orientations necessary to overcome the humanitarian crisis facing modern society.

2. Literature Review

The study of ethical and sociocultural transformations of humanity requires a multidisciplinary approach that integrates classical sociology, anthropology, cultural history and philosophy. First of all, let us pay due respect to the classical works related to the issues of our study, the authors of which are P. Bourdieu [3], E. Durkheim [5], M. Eliade [7], C. Lévi-Strauss [10].

The theoretical foundation of the article is based on the work of N. Elias “On the Process of Civilization. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Studies”, where the author reveals the mechanisms of sociogenesis and psychogenesis of human behavior, emphasizing the historical conditioning of individual and collective psychology. The scientist’s ideas are based on the integration of concepts and data collected by historians, anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers. N. Elias delved into the analysis of chronologically voluminous changes in social structures, which usually found themselves on the margins of classical academic attention [15]. A significant addition to classical theoretical positions is the work of E. Taylor. His studies of primitive culture, despite their contradictions in the light of modern scientific approaches, continue to serve as an important reference point for anthropological retrospective discussions [17]. To revise the paradigm of the primitive worldview, the concept of “new animism” proclaimed by H. Harvey was used. It opens up the possibility of interpreting primitive socio-cultural practices as a complex complex of intersubjective relationships

and interdependencies [16]. The analysis of the processes of transformation of social organization associated with the “Neolithic revolution” was carried out on the basis of scientific generalizations by S. Svizzero and C. A. Tisdell. Scientists note the multidimensionality and complexity of the factors that contributed to the emergence of agricultural activity in various environmental conditions and geographical landscapes [15].

In the framework of our article, we cannot ignore the significance of monumental architecture and ritual practices as factors and tools that both influenced and demonstrated civilizational progress. In particular, O. A. Bicknim emphasized that the sacred architecture of the Neolithic era was not a consequence of the formation of complex social hierarchies. On the contrary, it became their prerequisite [2]. Technological achievements of the Bronze Age and their impact on social differentiation are the subject of study of B. G. Trigger. The scientist investigated the relationship between the development of urban architecture and the process of legitimization of power by elite groups of the population [16].

Semiotic and aesthetic components of Paleolithic art, with special attention to visual signs in the structuring of contemporary ethical norms, are considered in the monograph by S. Vierzig [18] and the article by S. Stoyan [14]. For the comparative analysis of cultural practices, the publication of N. Shuba, which is devoted to the universality of worldview patterns in various geographical regions, is used [13]. The analysis of the modern context of the development of cultural practices and their influence on the formation of new meanings is based on the theoretical principles proposed by G. Mednikova. The scientist insists on the crucial importance of innovative practices in the processes of transition to new historical stages in the history of mankind [11].

Our review of scientific developments confirms the importance of abandoning views on primitive times as primitive and backward. Instead, it is worth focusing on a deeper worldview analysis of primitive societies and ancient civilizations as extremely complex and multi-vector cultural phenomena in history. It is this vision, in our opinion, that will help find effective ethical guidelines in the conditions of another technological breakthrough.

3. Problem Statement

We focused on the study of the inertial nature of the development of civilizations, the origins of which lead to the epochal changes caused by the “Neolithic Revolution”. The transition from adaptive hunter-gatherer communities to complex hierarchical urban systems formed the basis of the dualistic thinking of “us - them”. In such circumstances, technological superiority became a tool for justifying power and excluding the Other. Today, this archaic impulse to dominate the environment has acquired new forms. We are talking about digital dependence, where artificial intelligence and virtual systems recreate the Neolithic ideal of material success, measured purely by technical progress. The real challenge continues to be the lack of ethical guidelines that would allow us to overcome the entrenched paradigm and transform the man-made environment from a means of control into a space for integration and intercultural dialogue.

4. Methods and Materials

Given the scale of the chosen topic and its significant historical duration, the article uses a conceptual-review approach. This allowed us to avoid excessive concentration on detailed coverage of each individual historical stage. Instead, we were able to focus on identifying the fundamental socio-cultural and ethical patterns that unite primitive society, the era of ancient civilizations and modernity into a common discursive space.

The methodological basis of the study is a comprehensive approach. It integrates retrospective analysis, historical-typological methodology and semiotics of culture. This vision of solving the scientific problem made it possible to trace the evolution of ethical regulators from the Paleolithic era to urgent digital challenges.

As one of the research methods, we chose comparative analysis, thanks to which we managed to identify common trends and patterns of transformation of socio-cultural practices during different stages of the development of humanity as a socio-cultural community. Thanks to this method, it was possible to compare animistic models of interaction with nature in the Paleolithic with the institutional systems of ancient civilizations of the Neolithic era, as well as draw a parallel with modern ethical

dilemmas in the conditions of virtualization of society and the development of artificial intelligence. The article also applies the method of semiotic analysis, which turned out to be fundamental for the interpretation of primitive art. The use of this method made it possible to decipher the visual images of Paleolithic caves not as artifacts of primitive culture, but as complex sign-symbolic systems of sociocultural regulation.

The source base of the article was formed thanks to: the works of classics of anthropology and sociology, which became the theoretical basis for the analysis of sociogenesis; modern academic research on the problems of Neolithic anthropology and “new animism”; archaeological data and descriptions of architectural historical and cultural complexes. We also drew on conceptual developments in the evolution of social organization, in particular the idea of the transition from flexible hunting groups to corporate communities. This combination of source material and methods allowed us to avoid a linear interpretation of the historical process, focusing on a critical rethinking of the technological facade of civilization as a factor determining contemporary crises of trust and ethical challenges.

5. Results and Discussion

As N. Elias noted, “the sociogenesis and psychogenesis of human behavior have not yet been studied in general. This very statement of the question may seem strange. And yet it is obvious that people from different social units behave differently in a very definite way. We are used to talking about this as something self-evident. We are talking about a peasant or a courtier, an Englishman or a German, a person of the Middle Ages or the 20th century, meaning that people from the social units indicated by such concepts, despite all individual differences, behave in a certain way the same way, as compared with individuals in groups, in each case opposed to them: a peasant behaves in a certain sense differently than a courtier, an Englishman or a Frenchman - differently than a German, a medieval person - differently than, say, a person of the 20th century, no matter how much in common in everything else - after all, they are all people - they had” [7, p. 77.]

The thesis of the outstanding sociologist-anthropologist actualizes the need for a retrospective analysis of those “social units” that laid the foundation of human sociogenesis. The first and longest stage, where the initial coordination of the individual’s mental structures with the requirements of the collective took place, is the period of pre-state existence of humanity - the era of primitiveness.

In classical anthropological science, the concept of “primitive culture” was used for a long time to define communities of this type [17]. From the point of view of modern researchers, this type of society is defined by a set of specific features: the absence of written means of recording information, spatial and communicative isolation, demographic limitations, as well as the relative elementariness of the technological basis and social hierarchy. In the absence of textuality, the transmission of historical and cultural memory, religious and mythological ideas and fundamental ethical guidelines, which N. Elias mentions, was carried out through oral tradition.

It also accumulated in the semantics of primitive art and the symbolic space of ritual actions [18, pp. 169–170]. An example of such accumulation is the rock painting of the Anatolian complex of Mount Latmos. The socio-cultural problem of interpreting these large-scale panoramas is to determine their functional purpose. The high concentration of drawings in a limited landscape space suggests that Latmos served as a long-term cult center for the primitive communities of the region. It is significant that the figures of people and symbols here underwent deep schematization. Within the framework of modern semiotics of art, such artistic schematization is marked not as a sign of the artist’s “incompetence” or “primitiveness”, but as a conscious aesthetic marker of a sacred or cult object/being/phenomenon. The schematic image became a universal sign that allowed codification of the first ethical norms, myths about the origin of the genus and rules of behavior in the community, making the visual staging of the rock space a rostrum of socio-cultural regulation [18, p. 149].

The cultural ritual actions of Paleolithic man were closely related to issues of survival, which were mostly solved through hunting. Accordingly, about 80% of Paleolithic drawings depict not people, but animals that served as a source of food and material for making clothes. Successful hunting ensured the continuation of the existence of the community. At the same time, it gave rise to the first fundamental ethical problem of primitiveness: the need to take the life of another creature for the sake of one’s own survival. Accordingly, magical rituals were practiced not only as a means of gaining symbolic power over prey, but also as an instrument of ethical mediation with the spirit of the killed animal [4]. For example,

in the Trois-Freire cave there are images of dying bears, whose bodies are covered with numerous wounds. Another example is a rhinoceros wounded by spears, which is represented on a pebble from La Colomber. Another notable image is a mare, whose body is covered with traces of numerous blows, probably inflicted by weapons. This image was found in the Montespan cave. It is suggested that such images are associated with magical or ritual practices related to hunting or symbolic production. For example, images of bison with arrows aimed at the heart, as in the Nio cave, or mares struck by spears, found in Lascaux or the Palicci grotto, have a similar meaning. In particular, the image of a bison on the clay floor of the Nio cave stands out. The cup-shaped depressions, carved by drops of water falling from the ceiling of the cave, create the illusion of wounds standing out on the animal's body. The artist (or artists) emphasized this effect with the help of red ochre, which symbolically resembles blood flowing in thin streams. Deep grooves were formed long before the creation of the drawing, but our distant ancestor successfully used them, circling the contours of the bison's body, transforming natural details into expressive images of wounds [14, p. 17].

In the consciousness of primitive man, the entire surrounding world was spiritualized and perceived through the prism of the unity of all its components: people, animals, plants, elements, landscapes. In the worldview of primitive people, ideas about supernatural beings that could influence their lives, the well-being of the genus and had the ability to change the surrounding world, on which man depended to a large extent, gradually formed. The attitude towards the world of the most ancient people was reflected in rock drawings, engravings on the bones of hunted animals, as well as in the first sculptural products, three-dimensional molded and carved figures. The artifacts found gave scientists reason to conclude that the life of primitive man was not limited only to the struggle for survival or satisfaction of material needs. Moreover, the analysis of the geography of the finds of the Paleolithic era shows that after *Homo sapiens* left Africa and mastered other continents, they developed various cultures, languages, worldviews, mythological ideas and principles of social organization, which differed depending on environmental conditions. At the same time, a certain unity of patterns can be traced in their cultures, which is manifested, in particular, in examples of art objects. Exhibits of primitive art presented in leading museums of the world, as well as cave paintings of the Paleolithic era found in different parts of Europe are indicative. For example, samples from the Los Caballos cave (Spain, Upper Paleolithic), the Fond-de-Gome cave (France, Paleolithic) or the Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc cave in the south of France. One of the oldest examples of cave painting in the world is the images in the Lascaux cave (France), dated to the Late Paleolithic (approximately 21 thousand years ago). These works of art never cease to amaze with their complexity and beauty. However, it is no less amazing that similar artistic manifestations have been found outside European regions. In particular, works of Paleolithic art discovered in Indonesia and Australia [13, pp. 270-271].

The described specificity of Paleolithic art requires a significant rethinking of the tools of its interpretation. If classical anthropological science, in particular, within the framework of E. Taylor's theory, was inclined to interpret these practices as manifestations of "naïve" or "illusory" spiritualization of nature due to the lack of rational knowledge, then modern researchers offer a fundamentally different theoretical perspective. Within the framework of the concept of "new animism", primitive worldviews are assessed not as insufficiently developed systems of knowledge, but as alternative, complexly organized ways of existence, which significantly differ from the modern Western approach to the perception of the world. A feature of "new animism" is the expanded interpretation of the concept of personality or subject. In such a worldview model, the status of a person goes beyond the human species. Non-human beings, such as animals, plants, or even elements of the landscape, also fall under its scope. Through this prism, magical rituals, in particular the symbolic infliction of wounds on images of animals during hunting, are interpreted not as a desire to dominate or subjugate nature. It is a form of ethical and social dialogue with non-human subjects [12, p. 8-9].

The reinterpretation of animism provides a solid basis for a deeper understanding of the worldview not only of primitive societies, but also of modern culture. Instead of considering animism through the prism of outdated stereotypes, it is worth recognizing it as a complex system of ontological and epistemological ideas that goes far beyond primitive explanations [6]. Animism reflects a way of integrated interaction with the natural environment, where the latter is perceived not as purely inanimate matter, but as an active participant in a common existential and value space. This opens up the possibility of a new reading of beliefs and rituals related to the relationships of people with animals, plants, natural landscapes and water elements both in the past and in the present. Such a perspective allows us to rethink the traditional Western dualism between the concepts of man and nature, which

has long dominated philosophical discourses. Instead, a vision of a more integrative approach to interaction with the surrounding world is proposed, which is especially relevant given the current ecological crisis and the intensification and acceleration of climate change.

In addition, “magical” behavior towards visual images has not disappeared, but has remained an integral part of the modern world. Given the problems of the development of cultural practices, this demonstrates a pervasive ethical pattern: just as in primitive times man sought ethical frameworks for interaction with non-human subjects/nature, so today he is looking for new ethical guidelines for communication with the man-made environment and artificial intelligence.

The primitive period in the history of mankind is of extreme importance, since it was during this long period that the fundamental stages of the formation of human civilization took place. During this period, humanity made a number of fundamental inventions and discoveries that became the basis for further development. In particular, it learned to extract and use fire, initiated and developed various forms of artistic culture: fine arts, dance, theatrical performances, sculpture, architecture, etc. At this time, religious ideas were also formed, and among the technical achievements, the wheel, potter’s wheel and boat were invented. With the development of crafts, agriculture and cattle breeding, the culture of primitive society became the basis for the cultural formation of settled agricultural peoples, among whom the first civilizations arose and developed, contributing to the formation of new cultural and technological achievements in different regions of the world.

The legacy of primitive culture remains relevant to this day, especially manifested in the customs and rituals of family and everyday life, folk art, religious beliefs and even in the worldviews of modern people. Ancient culture is no less significant than modern, because it was in its depths that the foundations of all the accumulated experience of mankind were laid. Many of its principles continue to serve as the foundation of our current culture, and the most important achievement remains man himself as the creator and bearer of culture. It is quite difficult to determine the exact moment of the emergence of the first civilizations on Earth, since this process stretched out in time. However, the fundamental factor that contributed to their emergence was the “Neolithic revolution”, the transition of humanity from an appropriating economy to a reproducing one. This stage marked the beginning of the formation of several important centers of development that played a significant role in the history of mankind. These centers influenced other societies, integrating them into their economic, social and cultural space.

In such centers with higher material life and well-being, as archaeological data show, there was a significant increase in population. This, in turn, stimulated migration to new territories suitable for agriculture and animal husbandry. Subsequently, the separation of crafts, such as weaving, spinning and pottery, took place. The differentiation of craft activities required the exchange of products of labor, which led not only to the expansion of commodity exchange, but also to the mutual enrichment of cultures. In the Neolithic period, agriculture began to form independently in at least seven different parts of the world, without any connections between them. This means that the emergence of agriculture took place in completely different ecogeographical conditions. This is indicated by the diversity of plants and animals that were first domesticated in each of the regions, as well as differences in the climatic and ecological features of these areas. This multifaceted nature explains the impossibility of a single universal theory of the Neolithic transition and demonstrates why different regions chose different paths of development. In addition to the significant variability of resource conditions, there are two main theories explaining the process of the Neolithic revolution. The first is based on the socio-evolutionary concept and claims that the transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture was a consequence of the adaptation of human communities to external challenges, such as environmental changes caused by climatic transformations. The second theory is based on the cultural-historical approach and emphasizes that the development of agriculture was a consequence of internal decisions of the communities themselves [15, p. 3]. With the invention of bronze, contacts between different regions of the world were significantly accelerated. Improvements in means of transport, the appearance of boats with sails and chariots, additionally contributed to this process. Large-scale communications created the need for the development of scientific knowledge, such as astronomy, mechanics, cartography and surgery.

In the process of technical progress, social sciences began to emerge and a legal system was formed. It was then that writing became widespread, becoming the main way to transfer knowledge and cultural experience. With the transition to a civilizational form of existence, human communities gradually lost the homogeneity inherent in primitive society. Religion, science, art and crafts became

increasingly specialized, turning into independent components of culture. Ultimately, a division of labor arose. Some people concentrated on scientific research or performed the role of priests. The division between physical and intellectual activity became entrenched. In addition, cities and monumental architectural structures became attributes of civilization. Cultural development was accompanied by active growth in various spheres of human activity, which marked the beginning of a new stage in the history of mankind. The material prosperity of the first civilizations became possible due to significant successes in the technological development of the environment. The stability of urban centers was ensured by the development of intensive agriculture, which was based on complex irrigation systems, flood control measures and the use of the plow. Such an economic foundation contributed to the emergence of a wide network of specialized crafts, from metalworking and shipbuilding to weaving and pottery. It is also necessary to mention bronze, the use of which gave a real impetus to the progress of that time. It was not just a material for weapons. Bronze served as a tool with which humanity, for example, implemented ambitious architectural projects and significantly improved tools and weapons. However, this material success required a complex hierarchical organization and specialization, which finally consolidated the division of labor and social stratification of the first urban centers [16].

The Sumerian and Mesopotamian cultures, with their outstanding architectural monuments and the first urban settlements, became the founders of the idea of civilization. A significant role in this was played by the scale, quality and durability of the architectural environment, which clearly distinguished the countryside from the urban space. It was the cities, innovations, cultural leadership and divine will, as their inhabitants believed, that determined the uniqueness of these societies compared to those who remained outside the city walls. In spiritual life, ritual and symbolic practices had ideological and regulatory significance and were not limited to reflecting economic changes. On the contrary, they were the main driver of the processes that accompanied the Neolithic transition [1]. Shamanic rituals served as a mechanism for overcoming climatic and economic challenges, while ancestor veneration contributed to the consolidation of communities in certain landscapes. At the same time, cosmological systems interpreted agricultural existence as an integral part of participation in the sacred process of creation and maintenance of fertility. The evolutionary dynamics of the transition to new forms of identity allow for a deeper analysis of these interconnected changes, which reflect the transformation of the social organization of humanity. It marked the movement from mobile and flexible groups of hunters and gatherers to settled, stable and functionally integrated corporate communities. Although more than ten millennia have passed since the era of the "Neolithic Revolution", modern societies remain closely connected with the institutions and cosmological concepts that were initiated during this period [2, p. 2].

Among the features that characterize civilization as a separate phenomenon, urban planning and monumental architecture stand out. Examples from ancient Sumer and Mesopotamia vividly illustrate that the scale and durability of architectural structures served as a marker of the difference between rural settlements and urban centers. However, this monumentality had its contradictory consequences. Urban centers, which positioned themselves as the embodiment of divine will, simultaneously erected a symbolic barrier between themselves and those who belonged to the outside world or were defined as the Other.

We still remain within the same value paradigm, where success is measured by the ability to dominate the environment. As long as we continue to perceive civilization exclusively as a shiny technological showcase, there is a risk of continuing to reproduce patterns of exclusion and aggression, the origins of which go back to the first city ramparts. This brings us back to the urgent need to formulate new ethical guidelines that can overcome this outdated inertia.

6. Conclusions

The development of human culture is not a straight path from primitiveness to technological perfection and the affirmation of man as the pinnacle of creation. It is rather a complex and multidimensional dynamic. Within its framework, socio-cultural practices are constantly adapting to the new ethical challenges of each historical era. Retrospective analysis makes it possible to identify certain patterns that permeate human history from the Paleolithic to the present. The first important aspect is the continuity of ethical reflection. For example, primitive art and rituals should not be reduced to a naive deification of nature. They performed the function of regulating ethical relations between humans and non-human subjects. It can be assumed that modern attempts to define ethical principles in

interaction with artificial intelligence are structurally similar to those ancient efforts. It is about the desire to establish rules of mutual understanding with the “Other” that goes beyond the human species. The second aspect is the paradox of the civilizational facade. For example, the “Neolithic Revolution” brought humanity unprecedented material prosperity and monumental achievements in architecture. At the same time, it also became a source of rigid social hierarchies and the exclusion of “Others”. It is important to note that modern ideas about success, based on technological dominance, often reproduce these ancient models of aggression and social isolation, masking them with technical progress and civilizational progress. The third aspect is related to the revision of the concept of civilization. Today, the need to deconstruct the traditional idea of civilization is becoming increasingly acute. Instead of identifying progress only with technical achievements, the ethical dimension and the development of emotional intelligence are gaining more and more importance. This is not just an important requirement of the time. It is a condition for the further existence of modern society. It is precisely cultural practices, and not only institutional changes, that remain the determining factor in the birth of new meanings that can overcome the modern moral vacuum.

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