

# THEORY AND HISTORY OF CULTURE



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Original article



## Cultural Space as a Concept of Social and Humanitarian Knowledge

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### Abstract

**Introduction.** The relevance of the topic is due to the need to revise the content of concepts, the need to improve means of philosophical analysis of modern socio-cultural processes. The purpose of the article is to clarify the possibilities of methodological approaches that contribute to a deeper understanding of culture, theory and education practice.

**Materials and methods.** General scientific methods are used, as well as the methodology of cultural research due to the post-non-classical type of rationality.

**Results.** Connotations of the concept and its relevance as a methodological tool corresponding to the needs of modern scientific activity are considered. The concept is considered as a resource of cognitive activity legitimizing the inclusion of metaphors and results of human perceptual experience in scientific research. It is shown that the understanding of the human world reaches a new level taking into account the importance of the identified methodological potential of the introduced concept of “cultural space”. The results of the study emphasize the thesis that the cultural space covers a variety of diverse spaces (subspaces) due to the diversity of human relations with the world, hierarchy of values accepted by people.

**Discussion and conclusion.** Such subspaces of culture as the space of politics, the space of art, the space of education, etc. are highlighted. It is claimed that educational environment, educational space, and space of education are not identical concepts. Their distinction is connected with the understanding of the role of a person – primarily either as an object of pedagogical influence (educational environment, educational space), or a person is recognized as a subject of the process of their own formation, independently constituting their living space due to the level of education. The interpretation of the space of education is proposed as one of the most significant dimensions of human existence which develops while the person is realizing their capabilities. The hypothesis is confirmed that the space of education can be considered as a condition for the possibility of a person’s self-identification, creating prerequisites for their social, professional, and overall personal improvement.

**Keywords:** concept, culture, cultural space, educational space

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Научная статья

## Пространство культуры как концепт социально-гуманитарного знания

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### Аннотация

**Введение.** Актуальность темы обусловлена необходимостью пересмотра контента понятий, потребностью совершенствования средств философского анализа современных социокультурных процессов. Цель статьи – уточнение

возможностей методологических подходов, способствующих углубленному пониманию культуры, теории и практики образования.

**Материалы и методы.** Использованы общенаучные методы, а также методология исследования культуры, обусловленная постнеклассическим типом рациональности.

**Результаты исследования.** Рассмотрены коннотации концепта, его востребованность в качестве методологического инструмента, соответствующего потребностям современной научной деятельности. Концепт рассмотрен как ресурс познавательной деятельности, легитимизирующий включение в научные исследования метафор, результатов перцептивного опыта человека. Показано, что осмысление мира человека выходит на новый уровень с учетом значимости выявленного методологического потенциала введенного концепта «пространство культуры». Результаты исследования подчеркивают тезис, что пространство культуры охватывает множество разнообразных пространств (субпространств), обусловленных многообразием отношений человека с миром, иерархией принимаемых людьми ценностей.

**Обсуждение и заключение.** Выделены такие субпространства культуры, как пространство политики, пространство искусства, пространство образования и др. Утверждается, что образовательная среда, образовательное пространство, пространство образования – не тождественные концепты. Их различие связано с пониманием роли человека – по преимуществу либо как объекта педагогического воздействия (образовательная среда, образовательное пространство), или человек признается субъектом процесса собственного целостного становления, самостоятельно конституирующим свое жизненное пространство, обусловленное уровнем приобретенной образованности. Предложена интерпретация пространства образования как одного из наиболее существенных измерений существования человека, складывающегося в процессе реализации человеком своих возможностей. Подтверждается гипотеза о том, что пространство образования может рассматриваться в качестве условия возможности самоидентификации человека, создавая предпосылки его социального, профессионального, личностного совершенствования.

**Ключевые слова:** концепт, культура, пространство культуры, пространство образования

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**Introduction.** The relevance of the research topic is associated with a change of paradigms which is immanent to the development of philosophy, as well as with a revision of the concepts content, a change of philosophical analysis means, contributing to the clarification of the meanings of categories using updated methodological techniques. Thus, the division of types of rationality into classical, non-classical and post-non-classical has reflected the demand for the cognitive abilities of a person corresponding to historical time, aimed at comprehending the object in its integrity. The purpose of the article is to clarify the possibilities of methodological approaches that contribute to a deeper understanding of culture, theory and education practice.

**Materials and methods.** To achieve the purpose, general scientific methods are used, as well as the methodology of cultural research due to the post-non-classical type of rationality. Within the framework of the non-classical type of scientific rationality, the interdependence of knowledge, means and operations of activity is taken into account, which determines the objective-true description and explanation of the world. Considering more specifically the characteristics of post-non-classical science, it is possible to identify a new subject area that becomes the object of its study. These are special natural complexes in which man is included as a component [1]. Within the framework of post-non-classical rationality, the possibility of more complete study of such an object as culture opens up [2; 3].

**Results.** Clarifying the connotations of the concept of culture, expanding the meaning of the term “space”, makes it necessary to use the term “concept” in scientific research. The concept captures the meanings of what they say, what they listen to. The concept fixes the focus on another, that is contained in the Latin word “conceptus” which means not only grasping, but also the conception, the birth of something that has not been expressed yet, is still intuitive, but needs clarification [4].

The idea of the concept, genetically related to the intellectual practice of the Middle Ages, is caused to life by the social need to understand the meaning of speech, to express it in a holistic process of pronunciation. The appeal to the “other” is what is immanently inherent in the concept. Concepts are conditioned by the ability of a person to collect (concipere) meanings, generalize them, turning them into universals that accumulate all human abilities [5].

In the philosophy of the New Age, the concept is supplanted by such a cognitive form as the idea, generated by the increased social need to focus on unambiguous true knowledge, the desire to free knowledge from communicative contexts. Epistemological analysis within the framework of this paradigm excluded the processes of meaning production and meaning understanding.

The turn to the concept in modern philosophy as a specific cognition form, not identical to the idea, occurs after the linguistic turn of the 1920s. The resource of cognitive activity includes the symbolization of the perceptual experience of a person, their ability to imagination, metaphors, paths (Greek tropos – constructions, methods of expression) (S. Langer, Hans Blumenberg, H. White). In general, in modern intellectual practice, philosophy appears as “creativity of concepts” opposed to the concepts of science. Concepts, understood as the core of the concept, are considered by researchers as “something internally present in thought, a condition for its very possibility, a living category, an element of transcendental experience” [4].

Thus, the concept can be described as a semantic form that arises and functions in the semantic field of a natural language, in the contexts of discursive practices (from speech to texts). This is its fundamental difference from the idea, the logical meaning of which is always universal, does not depend on the natural language and unambiguously expresses logical relations in the idea, in the ideal being.

The concept expresses not only the totality of the object’s features, but also those representations, knowledge, associations, experiences that are associated with it. Concepts generated by a person’s ability to collect (concupere) meanings generalize them, turn them into universals with significant methodological potential.

The study of the space of culture as a concept made it possible to state the presence in it of a merger of two meanings: culture and space. How did the expansion of cultural content take place? What are the meanings of the terms of spaces?

The history of the study of cultural problems is carried out in two ways: secular and religious. A number of definitions of culture in the modern world take into account the existing ways of ordering experience, with the help of which the behavior of people in a particular social group is built (the author of this idea is the American sociologist Neil Smelser). From the point of view of the Anglo-American sociologist A. Giddens, culture is identical to the social order. This is a way of organizing the interaction of people through the establishment of labor, religious, family traditions, rules for spending free time, etc. Such traditions are acquired by members of the community, contribute to the communication of people, their cooperation and are specific in different cultures [6].

According to the theory of sociocultural dynamics, the founder of which is considered to be P.A. Sorokin, culture is created and modified in the course of active interaction of people consciously or unconsciously able to influence each other’s behavior. Emerging material and spiritual artifacts form unity (combination) under the influence of various factors: spatial, functional, etc. [7].

The most promising approach to identify the essence of culture is the activity approach. The definition of culture as a historically established mechanism for adapting human communities to specific environmental and geopolitical conditions follows from the point of view of the authors who link the genesis of culture with human activities. The approach to culture as a specific human activity is represented by the Rostov school of philosophy, in particular, by the works of V.E. Davidovich, Yu.A. Zhdanov [8].

Activity is manifested both in the people’s actions and creativity. It helps to overcome frozen canons. Various abilities of a person are manifested in activity, not only their mind, but also their will, imagination, faith, intuition. This is a limiting concept that characterizes the activity of people which does not need other definitions. Culture in the framework of the activity approach performs the function of immanent (i. e. intrinsic) mechanism of activity. The understanding of culture as a way of carrying out an activity, its mechanism, contributes to a critical attitude to a phenomenological approach (from Greek phainomenon), a direct description of experience of knowing consciousness.

The activity approach in the understanding of culture determines the emergence of the idea of a dialogue of cultures, without which its understanding is deprived of proper completeness. In the works of M. Buber, M.M. Bakhtin, Yu.M. Lotman and other thinkers of the world and domestic philosophical knowledge, it is proved that limiting the meaning of culture to the problems of a single subject leads it to dying.

The concept of the subject that is relevant for the activity approach is understood in various aspects. The subject of activity means a person (a social group or society as a whole) who is active in relation to the object of activity (objects, processes and phenomena, other people and social groups). The activity of the subject is determined by the needs that motivate actions, that is, it is motivated, connected with setting a goal – creating an image of the desired result, choosing the means of carrying out the activity and specific steps (actions, processes) to achieve the goal. Individuals, small groups,

social institutions, states can function as a subject of activity. In this regard, it is appropriate to use such a concept as a subject of culture, personality culture, national culture, youth culture, culture of the West, East, etc.

Peculiar aspects of culture were revealed thanks to cultural anthropology, cultural ethnology, which take into account the specific orientations of the human race, the laws of the anthroposphere. In particular, our compatriot orientalist, philosopher L.N. Gumilyov developed a passionate theory of ethnogenesis. Using the concept of passionarity (from French *passionner* – “to captivate, excite passion”), which characterizes the irresistible inner desire for activity, changing one’s life, ethnosphere, the thinker describes the historical process as the interaction of developing ethnic groups with the landscape and other ethnic groups. Ethnos is meaningful as a dual unit in which natural and social are synthesized, features of the territories that have become their homeland are reflected.

The introduction of the concept of “space of culture” is genetically related to the tasks of the most complete understanding of the modern worldview, using the methodology of post-nonclassical science, updating the meanings of space.

How did the expansion of space content take place under the influence of new trends in the research practice of the 20th century? The term “space” becomes in demand, reflecting people’s need to perceive reality as an ordered, established world. Space characterizes both the natural world and the human world, in the system of its interactions. The changing ways of human activity have led to a change in the understanding of approaches to their actual activity. The term “action”, according to researchers, is more consistent with the moment of meeting a person, society in space, the knowledge and skills of a person are manifested in a complex in it. In practical schemes, prereflexive experience is revealed, including body experience. Action manifesting “internal” and “external” in unity determines the interpretation of space as a concept. The understanding of action as a way of constitution of space is prepared by methodological approaches of M. Heidegger.

In “actual spatiality” (M. Heidegger’s term), those norms that are set by the intersubjective structure of the life world itself are perceived. In accordance with them, a person acts. Through the intersubjective structure of the life world, interconnected meanings are mastered, references “in what capacity” and “for what” constituting the internal meaning of the world are realized [9].

The modern German social philosopher and sociologist Hans Joas considered in the experience of space the presence of a “trigger” – a creative action as interconnected with semantic and bodily dimensions [10]. Taking into account the “intentional nature of human action”, Joas builds an action model that emphasizes the meaning of the intersubjective (interbody in the language of M. Merlo-Ponti [11]) dimension. According to Joas, human action is due to the situation and the relationship in which the person is involved. The situation is a specific moment of space, in fact, a challenge to which a person is forced to creatively respond, to recognize the meanings and opportunities available in it.

**Discussion and conclusion.** Understanding the human world goes to a new level, taking into account the significance of methodological potential of the concept of “space of culture”. The space of culture covers many diverse spaces (subspaces), determined by the diversity of human relations with the world, people around them, hierarchy of values accepted by people. Such subspaces of culture as the space of politics, the space of art, the space of education, etc. are distinguished. Various modifications within any of the parts of the variety depend on the type of culture, paradigm, value system, nature of practice, etc.

The priority of specific ways of constituting the subspaces is historically determined, which was reflected in the spread of such modifications of education subspaces as educational environment, educational space, space of education. Their distinction is associated with the understanding of the role of a person, either as an object of pedagogical influence (educational environment, educational space), or a person is recognized as a subject of the process of their own holistic formation, independently constituting their living space, due to the level of education. The space of education is one of the most significant dimensions of human existence, taking shape in the process of a person realizing their capabilities. The space of education is a condition of opportunity, the creation of prerequisites for social, national, professional self-identification. This concept demonstrates its productivity in pedagogical practice, contributing to the development of pedagogical technologies.

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