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THE IDEA OF CULTURE: KANT'S BOUNDARY OF REASON AS AN IMPERATIVE IN THE EDUCATION OF A MODERN PERSON

The culturological twist in modern science and practical activities implies the clarification of the essence of culture. Turning to the history of the philosophical thought, it is possible to trace the transformation of the understanding of culture, the origins of the current discontinuity between the rational cognition and the life-purpose positions, which are discovered in the renaissance anthropocentrism and metaphysics of the practical reason of the Modern period. The article addresses the perspective of the Kantian interpretation of culture, which examines the reason with regard to its origin and highest maxims.

Keywords: Global civilization, culture and nature, philosophy of culture, fundamentals of education, sustainable development.

Introduction

Global challenges faced by the humanity in the new millennium, are apparently cannot be addressed without reference to the issues of culture. It seems to us that the time, when the fundamental importance of the problems of culture in the various spheres of the interest of society and humankind, including the issue of culture-nature relationship, has passed. After the international experts from the Club of Rome published the Limits to Growth report (1972), the issue of the fundamental relationship between culture and nature is not limited to the discussion about the deficit of the natural resources and the perspective of the resource-based economy. Eventually, it is being referred to both when considering the global climate problems and ecosystems in the long-term development of the world civilization.

The increasing interest towards the previously invisible and unconscious interrelation between social, economic, political, and technological phenomena on the one hand and the state of culture on the other exemplifies that the tradition to ignore them becomes anachronistic and unacceptable for modern thinking. Culturocentrism becomes a methodological standard in the different fields of knowledge. The book "Price of Civilization" by Jeffry Sachs, a prominent researcher and expert on macroeconomic development, can serve as an example of such culturological twist in the economic science. The author draws attention to the importance of studying not only the economic indicators but also the large-scale impact canvas: history of culture, politics, geopolitics, public opinion and the restrictions imposed by the environment and natural resources. He emphasizes the need for the holistic approach: the importance to clearly understand how the various constituents of economics and society fit together and how they are in accord with the world economy. "Like other economists, I pore over charts and data. In addition, I read stacks of opinion surveys as well as cultural and political histories. I compare notes with political and business leaders and visit factories, financial firms, high-tech service centres, and local community organizations. Sound ideas about economic reform must pass a "truth test" at many levels, making sense at the

community level as well as the national political level" [1. P. 6]. Sachs associates these issues with not only the social responsibility of the ruling elite – the “culture of power”, but also with the education system affairs, opens the door to the further renewal of society, including the possibility to contribute new ideas for sustainable development.

Despite the obviousness of the culturological twist and the relevance of the issue of the relation between culture and nature, the problem remains the following: the essential understanding of the culture. This understanding, as we know, is undergoing a significant transformation in the history of thought, and today it generates a serious divergence of views. In this article, we trace how the essence of culture is interpreted in the history of thought and how culture is related to cognition. We put the question: what transformations led to the formation of the currently prevailing science-centrism, to the gap between cognition and the meaning-of-life issues. This not only made the sphere of reason insane and irresponsible but also negatively influenced the modern systems of education, where the balance between the professionally competent knowledge and the existential-ethical guidelines started to disrupt in favour of the former.

1. The anthropocentric horizon of consciousness and the formation of a free reason

The fundamental foundations of the metaphysical project, which gave rise to the Western science and the technogenic civilization based on this science, that treats the world as the objective reality and describes it by means of quantitative characteristics, emerged in the Renaissance. This era was intended to revive the ancient tradition. But the appeal to antiquity remained external. We briefly outline the well-known ancient representation of the world as the living organism and the harmonious cosmos in which everything is in possession of the self, its own nature (physis) and lies in its metaphysical place. The Greek cosmocentrism considered culture (paideia) as the conformity of a human with the wonderful order of the cosmos. It is commonly known that the ancient history of Greek “paideia” exemplified several forms of education systems, which started long before the great education systems of Plato and Aristotle [2]. Without getting involved in the concrete content of the systems, it should be noted that the cognition and education were perceived by the ancient Greeks as inextricably linked. Therefore, no matter how different were the systems of education in ancient Greece, they shared common features – they all were based upon the idea of compliance of a human being with the cosmic order. The ancient interpreted nature (physis) as a broad notion encompassing all natural and human. Consequently, education was considered the process to conform to the order of nature. This fact implied the knowledge of the cosmic order. Therefore paideia in the philosophy of Plato was both the system of education and the “correctness of the view” able to see the world of ideas. Education and truth happened to be inseparable [3].

The Medieval theocentrism contemplates the existence of the world through the text of the Holy Scripture, embodying the Divine Logos as the truth of existence. In these texts, the world appears genuinely existent. Therefore, medieval scientia, formed in the historical period that created universities, was the education system, assessed not through the knowledge of the Trivium and Quadrivium. The pinnacle of the medieval scientia was the experience of the interpretation of the

Word of God. However, the medieval exegesis is inextricably linked with the doctrine of the mediator as the giver of the key to understanding the Divine Logos. Jesus Christ was the mediator and the “absolute teacher” (Clement of Alexandria). He guaranteed the person’s ability to *understand* the text of Scripture.

The idea of *humanitas* in the Middle ages was connected with the idea of *divinitas* – the incarnation of God. Therefore, the Life of Christ was a model for the cultivation of the “divine” in ourselves. To create the text of their life was the *only thing* that a medieval person could create. This was already vividly captured in the early Middle Ages in the thought of Saint Augustine, Alcuin, Abelard, Francis [4]. In the Middle Ages, as in Antiquity, cognition and education – were again conceived inseparable. It is from the medieval *scientia* that the notion of culture is deduced into this era.

The Renaissance, as it is known, did not revive the ancient ideas about nature, culture and cognition. The differences between the Antiquity and the Renaissance as the types of cultures were colossal. It should be noted, that the opposition of nature and culture as two different substances was for the first time fixed in the Renaissance. And this fact will have far-reaching consequences. This gives rise to the Cartesian division of the thinking and the extended substances (*res cogitans* and *res extensa*). As a result, the wholeness of the world and the wholeness of knowledge will become a serious philosophical problem. The Renaissance idea of *humanitas* and the anthropocentric worldview evolve during the Renaissance. The *studia humanitatis* is formed as a reaction to the medieval idea of *scientia*, and the idea of a human is increasingly adopting the demiurgic traits. Thinkers of the epoch were the first to start speaking about the incomplete image of a human and the freedom to complete it at their own discretion. Therefore, humanists consciously adopted the role of the educators of the human souls, in order to turn each and every one to decent humanity.

The Renaissance grounds of anthropocentrism in the Modern period scheduled a crucial shift in learning the world. The new science once again manifests the demiurgic traits of a person. Starting with Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes, the metaphysics of the practical reason is formed. Bacon puts forward the thesis: “knowledge is power” and sees the strategic task of the new science – to subdue nature to the human needs. The practical reason reveals its character in prudent planning and anticipation – thus changing the very understanding of the truth. Henceforth, the *truth* becomes a *judgment*. But the mind must be purified of all subjective and historical. A sharp distinction is drawn between cognition and culture. The aim is to exclude all human from cognition. With precise methodological consistency, Francis Bacon spelt out the programme of mind purification in his critique of idols (fallacies) of the mind. The disparity between the scientific (objective) knowledge and education is coming up. In this epoch, we can discover the historical root of the contemporary trend to reduce education to job-specific training and to assess it through competences.

The metaphysics of the practical reason set a goal – not to contemplate the order of being but to conquer nature, “drag away its secrets” and put in the service. This attitude towards nature turns it into an object (objective reality). The world as an objective reality is no longer thought of as a living organism (how it was treated by the Greeks). And today our language gives away the fundamental attitudes towards being. We are talking about the “natural resources”, i.e. think of nature as of

the raw materials storehouse. The origins of such views again lead us to the Renaissance anthropocentrism and metaphysics of practical reason.

The science of the Modern period evolves as the *mathesis universalis*. In the science of Galileo Galilei and Rene Descartes, the projecting mind requires depriving everything of their own self. Cognition is based on the subject-object opposition, unknown to the ancient form of knowledge, contemplating the harmonic order of the cosmos. The science of the Modern period demythifies nature. It is perceived as a whole but this wholeness is systemic – it is the unity of the mechanism. In order to deprive things of their own nature and self, Galileo introduced the distinction between “primary” and “secondary” qualities. Qualitative characteristics are eliminated as irrelevant, and the remaining quantitative characteristics allow to pack knowledge into a mathematical formula and prepare it for the technical use.

These changes as the result of the worldview open up the possibilities to form a fundamentally new type of organising the economic activities. Industrial production and capitalist economy emerge and develop. The organization and structure of the society undergo changes. Science, technology, forms of the economic activity, economics, social and political reality – all these forms of culture are related and based on anthropocentrism. The domination of the subject in the Modern period: the inner connection is stretching from the metaphysics of Rene Descartes to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, in which the anthropocentrism is reinterpreted into the metaphysics of will [5]. The world is deemed as a political-economic reality that defines not only the external circumstances of human life but also the inner character of its being.

The philosophical traditions interchange leads to the changing of the interpretation of culture: for the first time in the history of thought, the essence of culture acquires the value interpretation, and it is described by Konstantin Sergeev, one of the most profound Russian specialists in the field of history of philosophy. “On the basis of Hegel, Marx brought to the fore the supremacy of the instrumental reason, which finds its own shelter in the so-called *Lebensphilosophie*. The main condition of life itself happens to be instrumentality, usefulness and productivity. ... If it [life] is defined by history, which is now more fundamental than nature, or by the society, which depends now on political-economic relations, or by will to ultrapower, which demands a constant re-evaluation of values? Being-as-consciousness, as represented by Schopenhauer and Marx, transforms into being-as-will; and after the metaphysics of labour by Marx into being-as-life, determined by the will to power, will to might, a constant re-evaluation of values for the sake of life itself. The latter, i.e. life, is resulted through the production of culture. Since the XX century, understanding of being-as-culture becomes dominant. Culture gets independent being” [6. P. 145–146]. Thus, the culture is proclaimed as an institution that stores and unfolds the highest and supreme values of human existence. In “Toward a Philosophy of the Act” by Mikhail Bakhtin, the values take the form of “alibi” of human existence in the world.

It would seem, a human and culture had never been raised to such a height. But paradoxically, it is revealed that the metaphysics of will and sense of free values settlement for the sake of power increase, begin to dominate not only over nature but also over person and history. In their extreme forms, this leads to the complete oblivion of the being of all things, including the human existence. This is accomplished in the XX century, manifesting itself particularly clearly in its last

decades. Instrumental and value-based thinking manifests itself in different spheres, including culture and cognition.

2. The idea of culture and the postmodern mindset

Being-as-culture and Nietzschean will to power via a free settlement of values in the last decades of the XX century are refashioned in the post-modern mindset. According to postmodernism, there are no eternal values. Postmodernism opposes ideology, and any semblance of law and order is subjected to deconstruction so as to show its power over people and thus release it from the power of ideology. Postmodernism emphasizes the freedom and creativity of the individual. But the absolutization of freedom leads to the elimination of culture itself as a certain unique worldview, the world of meanings. There is only a diversity of opinions and styles.

The postmodern mindset is also apparent in the theories of globalization and virtualization, which advocate for the formation of a global culture, and thus either explicitly or implicitly oppose diversity of unique cultures. It seems that the post-modern mindset somehow had an impact on the principles of the Bologna education system in which the diversity and specificity of cultures are taken into account, but still the set for the fundamental overlap of education and national culture (education as enculturation) is absent. This point is not random when viewed in the broad context of understanding culture. It correlates well with the concepts of globalization, in which there are ideas about “the world as a single place”, “about the global human condition” [8].

It should be said that the postmodern mindset leads to a significant shift in the understanding of the essence of culture. This shift is discussed in detail in the book by Terry Eagleton “The Idea of Culture”. It carries out essentially the same idea of a universal culture (i.e., global culture). After criticizing the notion of culture in different interpretations of the philosophy of culture, Eagleton presents his own understanding. To this end, he separates “cultures” from “Culture”: “Given Culture’s own self-understanding, then, it is not difficult to see what it finds so scandalous about cultures. For cultures are blatantly particular, resonant of nothing but themselves, and without these differences, they would disappear” [7. P. 55]. “What Culture itself cherishes is not the particular but that very different animal, the individual. Indeed, it sees a direct relation between the individual and the universal. It is in the uniqueness of a thing that the world spirit can be most intimately felt; but to disclose the essence of a thing means stripping away its accidental particulars” [7. P. 55]. And then Eagleton clearly states: “Culture is itself the spirit of humanity individuating itself in specific works; and its discourse links the individual and the universal, the quick of the self and the truth of humanity, *without the mediation of the historically particular* (emphasis added by me. – A.K.Z.)” [7. P. 55]. Especially it is necessary to note that Eagleton criticizes the point of view of Johann Gottfried Herder for his “conscious assault on the universalism of Enlightenment” [7. P. 16–17]. He opposes the understanding of culture as wholeness, the understanding of culture as a unique historical formation – the autotelic and intrinsically valuable subject in the World history, which was coined by the German Enlightenment, perceived by the romantics and the succeeding German tradition of the philosophy of culture. Culture as a unique wholeness is eliminated by Eagleton, or rather it is atomized to autonomous individuals. He suggests that “Culture” only “universality”

in the individual. "The universal is not just the opposite of the individual, but the very paradigm of it" [7. P. 55]. "Individuality is the medium of the universal, while particulars are purely random" [7. P. 56].

The issue of the possibility of universal culture, introduced both by the concepts of globalization and Eagleton, do not seem to be so univocal. Universal culture is the same artificial creation as the Esperanto language. We can talk about the human civilization, but cultures are always associated with the unique visions of the world, horizons of being, meanings. The fact that modern societies are not culturally homogenous does not add any substantial change. Societal and religious heterogeneity of the modern societies is growing but to approach the rootedness of a human in culture within statistical (quantitative) and linear framework is wrong. Here it is necessary to rely upon the fundamental knowledge of anthropology, culturology and philosophy of culture. And on the strength of this, it should be understood that the increase of societal and religious heterogeneity poses serious questions to the education system, as the means of human enculturation.

Another aspect should be noted: the above-mentioned concepts are trying to present globalization as an inevitable result of historical development and therefore to reduce the multidimensionality of culture as the subject of history to the dynamics of economic systems. In fact, the unique cultures as the subjects of World history are much more multi-dimensional formations. In order to clarify this issue, it is necessary to divide between the two phenomena and the corresponding notions, which are often identified: there is no equal sign between integration and globalization. The processes of increasing integration in the universum of cultures are not directed against the uniqueness of cultures. They are determined by the interaction of cultures at different levels, including the spread of Western science and technological civilization based on it. Globalization is a completely different phenomenon, as it intends to create the unified space and aims at optimizing the operation of the transnational corporations (TNCs). But it is indifferent to the peculiarities of national states and cultures. Thus, the instrumental and value interpretation of culture in the globalization concepts are primarily focused not on the uniqueness of culture and individual but on the freedom of capital. This is in the interests of the political-economic reality and aims to establish the concept of such a societal framework that would be most beneficial for the free flow of finance and capital. Owing to this, society is more in control of homo faber, squeezing it into social cages and less in need of their unique personal manifestation. Modern "creativity" does not imply going beyond the standardized behaviour. When viewed in this context, the point of reduction of person's education into the plane of pure "competence" becomes clear.

It should be said that value thinking and instrumentalism resulting from it, in light of the postmodern mindset finds itself in epistemological constructivism as well. Modern scientific worldview – in the extreme tendencies in gnoseology – turns science and technical progress into such a power that allows a human to feel independent from nature. Modern people have become so obsessed with technical capabilities that they do not want to restrain themselves even in the face of imminent danger. It seems that the postmodern mindset, which opposed the "power of ideology", is ready to make a stand against the "power" of nature itself: a dangerous trend is emerging – the rejection of searching for the truth as such. Interest in being of all that exists by its very nature is losing its sense. People begin to imagine

that their mental world and human-created cultural habitat is more important for them than nature. Culture, which since the Renaissance was conceived as “non-nature” is transformed into the virtual world. But virtualization processes do not stop there. Instrumental, practical reason accommodates not only nature to its values and demands. From the perspective of “knowledge is power” the transformation of human existence takes its rise. On the basis of “values” attitude and while pursuing the aim of “practical utility” a human begins to change and structure history and culture, their own corporality, mind and memory. The existence of human and culture becomes virtual. Indifference towards the search for truth itself transforms cognition into the supporting knowledge, which performs the functions of self-organization and self-preservation of the social and virtual reality.

These extreme forms of reason manifestation in its infinite possibilities are not yet dominant, but it is impossible to ignore them. They actualize the need to clarify the issue of *how* science (cognition) and technical progress enter culture and how a human and culture think of themselves in relation to all that exists.

3. Culture as the culture of reason

The issue of the essence of culture is embracing the most important practical and fundamental importance. It is closely related to the issue of the human nature and the place of a human among all things. In the intellectual circulation of ideas, it is impossible to escape these issues already. Is it a reason for the acute character of the question of what is culture? It was in the Renaissance with its anthropocentric bases – culture for the first time is defined as “non-nature” – when the division between human and natural as two different substances takes place. The crack sprawls upon the monolith integrity of the world.

It would seem that as ever the Renaissance exalted a human, placing them in the centre of the universe. But the paradoxical outcome of anthropocentrism for people, as we have shown, was clearly revealed at the end of the twentieth century. Since the Renaissance people made the way from realizing their demiurgic traits, approving of themselves as the unique personalities, as the lords of nature, to the extent of relegating themselves to the mere object of manipulation. The downside of the Renaissance anthropocentrism was exposed not today, of course. One of those, who paid attention to it, was the Russian thinker Pavel Florenskiy. He noted the total secularization, inherent in this era, as well as the revitalization of semantic orientations of human existence, which previously used to bear a sacred character. Following this, the scientific revolution of the Modern period has radically altered the nature of cognition: it drove a wedge between mind and culture. Practical reason, purified from all human, appeared as the unlimited ability of cognition. Not by coincidence, since the XVII century, to the present, the cognition has developed under a slogan of “freedom of reason”.

But today, when the current science-centric doctrine of civilizational development manifests crisis features, cognition as free research undertaking is not perceived so unambiguously, as in the days of the scientific revolution of the modern period. Reflecting on the modern doctrine of sustainable development, the thought of Immanuel Kant and his attempt to indicate the boundaries of “pure reason” capture the particular attention. Despite the fact that the philosophy of Kant played a crucial role in the switching of the traditions, that his critical philosophy became the basis for Johann Fichte, Friedrich Schelling and Georg Hegel, preparing the

foundation of the philosophy of modern time, but the idea of Kant about the boundaries of reason was not grasped by his contemporaries. This was the point, stressed by Sergeev, who noted that with rare exceptions, the essential situation concerning Kantian thoughts, scarcely changed nowadays. In his article "The philosophy of Kant and New European metaphysical position", he suggests the idea that "Kant restricts dreamily-rebellious spirit inherent to Cartesian mind" [6. P. 9]. The fundamental essence of the human mind, according to Kant, reveals itself in the four famous questions: What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope? All these three questions indicate the following – *what* is human? Through these questions, a human is perceived not only as a natural being but as a human with regard to all that exists. The questions define the meaning-of-life issues of its existence. Philosophical anthropology of Kant is the inner centre of the true philosophy (metaphysics), which acquire the character of the worldview.

If starting with Descartes and Bacon, in the metaphysics of practical reason the truth is converted into the judgment, the Kant's judgment – the cognition abilities and good will of the subject – are united in a systemic integrity. Aesthetic and teleological judgements are united in one whole moral-religious understanding of the world. Such *holistically-symbolic* understanding of the world Kant calls culture. This determines Kant's approach to the culturological problematics. And the *symbol* is viewed as the key concept of the philosophical culturology. Kant's culturology connected the phenomenal world of the natural necessity and noumenal world of the moral freedom. This statement can be found in his first critical work – "The Critique of Pure Reason": "For the same reason, metaphysic forms likewise the completion of the *culture* of human reason. In this respect, it is indispensable, setting aside altogether the influence which it exerts as a science. For its subject-matter is the elements and highest maxims of reason, which form the basis of the *possibility* of some sciences and of the use of all". The culture of reason "is more useful in preventing error than in the extension of knowledge, does not detract from its value; on the contrary, the supreme office of censor which it occupies assures to it the highest authority and importance. This office it administers for the purpose of securing order, harmony, and well-being to science, and of directing its noble and fruitful labours to the highest possible aim – the happiness of all mankind" [9. P. 248]. In fact, the idea of Kant is clear: the greatness of knowledge is not in its power but in its measure and proportion. In this elevated sense, – education of a person – involves not only scientific knowledge communication but also an introduction to measure as the good, to the boundary as the limit, which is not to be understood as the end of all the progressive and advanced. The limit, in this case, is to be perceived as the alternative to lawlessness, disrupting the harmony of being of all that exists and proportion.

It should be highlighted that Kant was not alone. The Kantian idea of culture as the "culture of reason" and his attempts to indicate the boundaries of "pure reason" attracted the attention of Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Both geniuses felt the dangers hidden in the anthropocentric horizon of the consciousness and the emancipation of human abilities. In his conversations with Johann Peter Eckermann, Goethe spoke of the need to create the "critique of sense and mind", and Kant in his letter to Marcus Herz in June of 1771 wrote that he was working at a book which was aimed to identify the "boundaries of sensibility and reason". In "The Sorrows of Young Werther", Goethe emancipated sensuality that led to obsession and madness

[6. P. 9–10]. However, even nowadays the “healing power” (Sergeev) of the Kant’s brilliant critique remains not yet fully grasped and therefore undemanded. After Kant there appeared and emerged the valuable-based interpretation of culture and the dualism of the two sciences (“natural science” and “moral science”) which since the time of neo-Kantians of the Baden school (Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert) was the centre in the canon of cultures’ sciences. Classical organicism by Goethe and Herder with no dualism of sciences was interpreted in its own way. But with the following generations of the “organicists” and the “Lebensphilosophie followers” (Friedrich Nietzsche, Oswald Spengler, etc.) the valuable-based interpretation of culture and the pluralism of cultures turn into the central theme. In recent decades, the value-based interpretation of the essence of culture and the instrumental character of the mind has reached their limit, revealing their incongruity with modern directives of sustainability.

How should the new doctrine of sustainable development look like? There is no easy answer in this situation, as the issue is multifaceted, affecting all the inter-related spheres of human activity. We cannot predict. But it seems that one of the most important issues will be bridging the gap between cognition and morality through the “critique of the senses and the mind”. Now comes the time of understanding that culture stands behind both branches of scientific knowledge (humanities and natural sciences). But, apparently, it is necessary to focus more attention on comprehending the issue concerning the essence of culture. It seems that while thinking about *what* is culture, the particular attention is paid to the Kantian critical thought and holistically-symbolic understanding of the world. Measure, modesty and knowledge of boundary is common good in the world which is becoming closer and closer. Understanding culture as boundaries of the reason, we can imagine the meaning and regulations in the education of a human, who is responsible and complying with the being of all that exists.

4. Conclusions

As it is known, nothing can stimulate science more than the real problems. Growing worldwide interest in the field of cultural studies, serious methodological twists, oriented on the unique character of cultures in oriental, African and Asian studies – all these trends are not accidental. But the sciences of culture have different images, as well as cultures themselves, in which they are formed. They thematize and interpret the world in their own way. The articulation of the issues we addressed, is by no means characteristic of the Western thought – its history and present condition. Kant’s understanding of culture as the culture of reason again returns our thoughts to the comprehension of the truth of being of all that exists, which oblivion was described by Martin Heidegger. It is easy to guess that in other images the sciences of culture this questioning is by no means absent. This does not take away real problems of correlation between civilization and nature on a planetary scale and this gives rise to the needs for governing all the world processes.

The issue of world civilization-nature interaction optimization, as the most important question of the sustainable development doctrine, requires the formulation of general principles – regulations of conduct common to the universe of modern cultures. However, the existence of common regulations does not imply the negation of cultural diversity, which in the modern world is also causing a

growing anxiety, not less than the world civilization-nature correlation. Culture was and still is the unique world, and it is impossible to extract a human from it (without serious anthropological consequences). Therefore, the world development dynamics (oriented toward addressing global problems) has to be combined with the art of managing the cultural traditions dynamics. This idea was especially emphasized by the specialist international studies and culturologist, Eduard Markarian [10]. In the situation of the modern world, sciences of culture, which are formed in different countries and civilizations can no longer remain regional projects: challenges common to all mankind, and the doctrine of sustainable development require increasing the regulation level of the world processes. But not at the cost of the cultures' unification. Under the conditions, when it is impossible and unreal to rely on the single sample for all, unified regulations are to be expressed in regional notions. This, it seems to us, is the meaning and the practical challenges of cultural studies as a science, as well as the relevance of international discussion of its problems. In this context a new sense is added to the comparative studies of culture, stemming from the idea of culture's self, and it is able to contribute to the search for mild forms of the intercultural communication. The course on the unification is to be altered by the comparative studies of cultures, having both fundamental and practical meaning.

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At the moment we face a growing interest in the issue of the relationship between the state of culture and social, economic, political and technological phenomena. Culturocentrism becomes a methodological standard in the different fields of knowledge and practice. However, the essential understanding of culture and its relationship with knowledge remains a problem. The paper investigates the understanding of the essence of culture in the history of thought: from the ancient Greek “paidea”, the medieval scientia, the Renaissance definition of culture as non-nature (and the distinction between human and natural as two different substances), to the modern value-based interpretation of culture, finally to the understanding of being-as-culture. The paper critically evaluates the modern instrumental mind and postmodern interpretation of the essence of culture, as well as the futility of the idea of the universal human culture formation.

Today, when the doctrine of civilizational development based on science-centrism discovers its crisis features, a special attention is attached to the thought of Immanuel Kant and his attempt to indicate the boundaries of “pure reason”. The paper discusses the prospects of the Kant's interpretation of culture, considering reason from the point of view of its beginnings and highest maxims. If starting with Descartes and Bacon, in the metaphysics of practical reason the truth is converted into the judgment, the Kant's judgment, which includes the cognition ability and good will of the subject – are united in a systemic integrity. The greatness of knowledge, according to Kant, is not in its power but in its measure and proportion. In this elevated sense, – education of a person – involves not only scientific knowledge communication but also an introduction to measure as the benefit, to the boundary as the limit, which is not to be understood as the end of all the progressive and advanced. This understanding of the essence of culture seems relevant while reflecting upon the modern doctrine of sustainable development. Understanding culture as boundary of the reason, we can indicate the meaning and regulations in the education of a human, who is responsible and complying with the being of all things.

The global civilization-nature interaction problem, as the most important issue of the sustainable development doctrine, implies the elaboration of general principles and requires an increase in the level of the world processes' control. But they should not be introduced at the cost of cultures' unification: common regulations need to be expressed in regional terms. The course on the unification in the concepts of globalization is to be altered by the comparative studies of cultures, which at the moment is gaining both fundamental and practical meaning. It can contribute to the search for soft forms of intercultural interaction.