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THE PROBLEM OF SPACE AND TIME IN MODERN KAZAKH FALSAFES

The notions of space and time are thoroughly examined in the framework of Kazakh philosophy in this article. By fusing conventional wisdom with contemporary philosophical developments, the study seeks to offer a fresh interpretation of these core ideas in the context of Kazakhstan's distinct historical and cultural legacy. The main purpose of the research is to deeply analyze and comprehend these concepts in Kazakh philosophy, as well as to identify ways to interpret and rethink them in the context of cultural and historical features of the country. The research includes a variety of methods such as historical and philosophical analysis, comparative approach, cultural context analysis, interdisciplinary research and phenomenological analysis. The article examines in detail the influence of Kazakh culture and history on the understanding and interpretation of space and time, emphasizing the unique combination of nomadic traditions and modern influences. Special attention is paid to the results of a survey conducted among the public, the purpose of which was to collect opinions and views on the issue from various perspectives. The survey included questions related to the associations of the concepts of "space" and "time", and allowed us to identify how these concepts are perceived in modern Kazakh society.

Keywords: time, space, cultural factors, Kazakh falsehood, philosophical traditions.

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Қазіргі қазақ фәлсафасындағы кеңістік пен уақыт мәселесі

Бұл мақалада қазақ фәлсафасындағы кеңістік пен уақыт үғымдарына жан-жақты талдау жүргізіледі. Зерттеу Қазақстанның бірегей мәдени және тарихи мұрасы аясында осы іргелі тұжырымдамаларға жаңа көзқарас ұсына отырып, дәстүрлі көзқарастар мен заманауи философиялық үрдістерді біріктіруге үмтүлады. Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты-Қазақ фәлсафасындағы осы үғымдарды терең талдау және түсініу, соңдай-ақ оларды елдің мәдени және тарихи ерекшеліктері аясында түсіндіру және қайта қаралу тәсілдерін анықтау. Зерттеу тарихи-философиялық талдау, компаративистік тәсіл, мәдени жағдайды талдау, пәнаралық зерттеулер және феноменологиялық талдау сияқты әртүрлі әдістерді қамтиды. Мақала аясында қазақ мәдениеті мен тарихының кеңістік пен уақытты түсінуге және түсіндіруге әсері егей-тегжейлі қарастырылып, көшпелі дәстүрлер мен заманауи әсерлердің бірегей үйлесімін атап өтті. Жүртшылық арасында жүргізілген сауалнаманың нәтижелеріне ерекше назар аударылады, оның мақсаты мәселеге әртүрлі пікірлер мен көзқарастар жинау болды. Сауалнама «кеңістік» және «уақыт» үғымдарының бірлестіктеріне байланысты мәселелерді қамтыды және осы үғымдардың қазіргі қазақ қоғамында қалай қабылданатынын анықтауға мүмкіндік берді. Осы сауалнаманың нәтижелері талдауды байыттып, қазақ философиясы мен мәдениеті осы іргелі үғымдарды қабылдауды қалай қалыптастыратынын түсінүүшін бірегей деректер берді. Қорытындылай келе, бұл зерттеу қазақ фәлсафасы мен мәдениеті арқылы кеңістік пен уақытты түсінуді көнектіте отырып, мәдениетаралық зерттеулер мен философия саласына айтарлықтай үлес қосады. Мақала осы тұжырымдамаларға жаңа көзқарасты ұсынады, олардың әртүрлі мәдени және тарихи жағдайларда қалай қайта түсіндірлетінін көрсетеді.

Түйін сөздер: уақыт, кеңістік, мәдени факторлар, қазақ фальсафасы, философиялық дәстүрлер.

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**Проблема пространства и времени
в современной казахской фальсафе**

В этой статье осуществляется всесторонний анализ концепций пространства и времени в контексте казахской философии. Исследование стремится интегрировать традиционные взгляды и современные философские тенденции, представляя новый взгляд на эти фундаментальные концепции в свете уникального культурного и исторического наследия Казахстана. Основная цель исследования заключается в глубоком анализе и осмысливании этих концепций в казахской философии, а также в выявлении способов их интерпретации и переосмысливания в контексте культурных и исторических особенностей страны. Исследование включает в себя многообразие методов, таких как историко-философский анализ, компаративистский подход, анализ культурного контекста, интердисциплинарные исследования и феноменологический анализ. В рамках статьи подробно рассматривается влияние казахской культуры и истории на понимание и интерпретацию пространства и времени, подчеркивая уникальное сочетание номадических традиций и современных влияний. Особое внимание уделяется результатам анкетирования, проведенного среди общественности, целью которого было собрать мнения и взгляды на проблематику из различных перспектив. Анкетирование включало вопросы, связанные с ассоциациями понятий «пространство» и «время», и позволило выявить, как эти концепции воспринимаются в современном казахском обществе. Результаты этого анкетирования обогатили анализ и предоставили уникальные данные для понимания того, как казахская философия и культура формируют восприятие этих фундаментальных концепций. В заключение, исследование представляет собой значительный вклад в область межкультурных исследований и философии, расширяя понимание пространства и времени через призму казахской философии и культуры.

Ключевые слова: время, пространство, культурные факторы, казахская фальсафа, философские традиции.

Introduction

The categories of space and time have traditionally occupied a central place in philosophy, as they define the fundamental parameters of human existence, nature, and society. They are used to describe the conditions of objects' coexistence in the world, as well as the processes of change and development that occur over time. Space reflects the form of existence and its extent, while time captures the duration and sequence of changes. These categories are universal, as any structure or system, from microscopic to cosmic scales, can be understood through the lens of space-time characteristics (Chumak, 2017: 68).

The relevance of addressing this issue is due to several factors. Firstly, in modern science and philosophy, the relational concept of space and time is becoming increasingly important, according to which they are understood not as isolated entities, but as forms of relationships between objects and processes (Minasyan, 2019: 118). This opens up new perspectives for philosophical analysis. Secondly, in the context of globalization and cultural

transformations, it is particularly important to study how different cultures interpret the basic categories of philosophy. Comparing Western concepts with Eastern and Turkic traditions allows us to expand our understanding of the diversity of philosophical approaches.

In this context, Kazakh philosophy is particularly interesting, as the categories of space and time are closely linked to the historical experience of nomadic civilization, worldview, cultural practices, and oral traditions. Kazakh culture is characterized by the perception of time as a cyclical process, and space as vast and dynamic at the same time. These features form a unique system of philosophical coordinates that differs from the linear and rationalist tradition of the West. The concept of time emerged from the human understanding of the change of events, the states of objects, and the cyclical nature of various processes. The first ideas about space and time were formed based on direct observation of nature, such as the changing of day and night, the seasons, and the movement of celestial bodies. The scientific and philosophical concepts of these categories evolved gradually, from ancient times to the present day.

Already ancient thinkers sought to explain the nature of space and time in a rational way. For example, Heraclitus associated them with the universal process of change and becoming: "We enter and exit the same river", emphasizing the continuity of movement and the fluidity of existence. Democritus, in his atomic theory, and Aristotle, in his systematic philosophy, proposed some of the most advanced concepts of space and time in ancient times (Chernysheva, 2019: 16). In their interpretation, these categories served as universal means of coordinating material objects and their states, which allowed them to assume that the properties of space and time depend on the nature of the interaction between material systems. At the same time, space and time were considered as equivalent and objectively existing forms of existence. In modern times, especially in the 17th to 19th centuries, the substantive concept, most fully embodied in the works of Isaac Newton, gained priority. According to this concept, space and time exist as independent entities, serving as containers for objects and processes. This model became the foundation of Newtonian mechanics, which was widely recognized as a model of precise science for a long time (Makeeva, 2019: 130).

However, the development of science in the 20th century, particularly Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum physics, challenged the substance-based approach and increased interest in a relational understanding of space and time. In today's interconnected world, where philosophical and cultural traditions coexist, it has become increasingly relevant to explore these concepts in an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural context. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the universal characteristics of existence while also highlighting the cultural nuances in their interpretation.

The originality of this research lies in examining the concepts of space and time through the lens of Kazakh falsafa, where traditional wisdom is combined with modern philosophical approaches. This allows for an alternative perspective on fundamental philosophical categories, expanding their interpretation and demonstrating their specific application in the historical and cultural context of Kazakhstan.

To achieve this goal, the following research objectives are addressed:

- To determine how Kazakh philosophy interprets the concepts of space and time;

- To analyze the impact of globalization and cultural transformations on the development of philosophical ideas about space and time in Kazakhstan;

- To identify and analyze the current associations with the categories of space and time in the minds of Kazakhstani youth and compare them with the traditions of Kazakh philosophy.

Literature review.

The study of philosophical categories of space and time in Kazakh philosophy is impossible without referring to the legacy of Abai Kunanbayev, whose ideas remain a methodological guideline for modern philosophical discourse in Kazakhstan. Kemerbay R.A., Tutinova N.E. believe that his worldview reveals a unique perception of space and time: on the one hand, Abai understands time as a historical category associated with the progress of society, and on the other hand, as an existential dimension reflecting the inner life of a person. In his works, one can see a desire to combine the linear understanding of time characteristic of the modernization project with the cyclical perception rooted in the nomadic tradition (Kemerbay, Tutinova, 2021: 33-40).

M.T. Uksukbayeva's work "Antique and Medieval Philosophy: Categories of Space and Time" occupies a special place in the study of the categories of space and time. The article examines the main philosophical approaches of antiquity and the Middle Ages to understanding these categories, conducts a comparative analysis, and identifies both similar and different positions of the thinkers. The author notes that the foundations of two key concepts, the substantial and relational, were already laid in ancient philosophy. In the substantial approach (Democritus, later Newton), space is thought of as a "void" that contains bodies, while time is seen as an independent duration that is independent of external influences. In the relational tradition (Plato, Aristotle), space and time are understood through relationships and motion: time is seen as a measure of change and a sequence of events, while space is seen as a place or order of coexistence (Uksukbayeva, 2020: 233-238).

An important area of modern research related to the problem of space and time is the analysis of their manifestation in the socio-historical and cultural context. For example, T.E. Tumashbay examines the category of time through the lens of generations and intergenerational continuity in her article (Tumashbay, 2022: 7). The author emphasizes that time in human existence is inextricably linked to the

transmission of experience, memory, and ideas from one generation to the next.

This concept is deepened by B. E. Columbaev in his work “human Chrono-Topos”, presenting time and space as coordinates of the spiritual experience of a person (Nikambekova, 2022: 332-338). For him, time is not just a measurable physical category, but a phenomenon that breathes in the inner world of a person. This interpretation echoes Abai’s thoughts about time: “the clock is not a clock”, which focused on the spiritual and ethical dimension of time. This issue is also reflected in the article by A. B. Nikambekova. Analyzing the work of Columbaev, the author emphasizes the division of time into “dead time” (spent on domestic needs) and “living time” (focused on the spiritual self-disclosure of a person). This idea can be associated with the wisdom of Abai: “tell me if you can say That You Are Dead, The Immortal left the word behind.” Even for Abai, time and space are categories that determine the spiritual search of a person, his legacy.

In the article A. Iskakova explores the understanding of the category of space in the worldview of the Kazakh people (Iskakova, 2025: 80-89). The author notes that space is a fundamental universal category closely related to the nomadic lifestyle and movement in the endless steppes. Analyzing the trilogy And. Esenberlin “Nomads”, the researcher identifies the key markers of the Turkic culture – “steppe”, “land” and “road”. These concepts are ambiguous: the steppe symbolizes freedom, the road symbolizes fate and the choice of one’s life path, and the land symbolizes the continuity of generations and the connection with one’s family.

Methodology

The study used the works of prominent Kazakh philosophers, including Al-Farabi, Abai Kunanbayev, Shakarim Kudaiberdiyev, Mashhyr Zhusip Kopeev, and other representatives of the national philosophical tradition. The analysis also includes contemporary research in the fields of philosophy, history, and cultural studies. The study also includes materials from oral folk art and written texts that reflect the evolution of ideas about space and time. In addition, the results of sociological surveys and empirical data were used.

A survey conducted among 3rd and 4th-year students of the Philosophy department at the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian University was particularly important for the study. The respondents were

asked to record their associations with the concepts of “space” and “time.” This method allowed us to identify the current perceptions of young people about basic philosophical categories and compare them with the traditional views of Kazakh culture. The data obtained were subjected to frequency analysis, which helped us identify the most stable and culturally significant categories that have been ingrained in the students’ minds.

The methodological framework of the study was based on a combination of historical and philosophical analysis aimed at identifying the stages of the formation of ideas about space and time in various cultural eras, and a comparative method that allowed for a comparison of the Kazakh tradition with Eastern and Western concepts. The additional cultural and contextual analysis ensured that the influence of the nomadic lifestyle, Islamic tradition, shamanic practices, and globalization processes on the formation of the categorical apparatus was taken into account. In addition, a phenomenological approach was used, which allowed us to consider the perception of space and time as a living experience reflected in the everyday practices and worldview of Kazakh society.

Thus, the use of an interdisciplinary approach, reliance on written and oral sources, and analysis of empirical data collected through student surveys have provided a holistic examination of the issue of space and time in contemporary Kazakh philosophy, allowing for the connection of traditional philosophical ideas with relevant cultural and social processes.

Results and discussion

Over the centuries, the history of the Kazakh people has developed in several historical and temporal dimensions, each of which has had a profound impact on the formation and evolution of the national falsafa. For example, the Khanate period, which lasted approximately 360 years, was a time of formation for the socio-cultural space that gave rise to the unique values of the nomadic civilization (Dalelbekkyzy, 2023: 134). After the fall of the Khanate, a new historical stage began, during which the previous system of worldview foundations underwent transformation, and society faced the need to find new foundations. The period of Kazakhstan’s incorporation into the Russian Empire opened up a unique socio-cultural space where Kazakh thought engaged in a dialogue with Western and Eastern traditions. These transitions reflect a

progressive shift from a psychology of imitation and subordination to the pursuit of a distinctive path and the formation of a philosophy of achievement.

The greatest thinkers played a key role in shaping the categories of space and time in Kazakh falsafa: Al-Farabi, Abai Kunanbayev, Shakarim Kudaiberdyuly, and Mashhyr Zhusip Kopeev. Their works allow us to trace the evolution of ideas about space and time from medieval philosophical syntheses to the national spiritual tradition of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Al-Farabi (9th-10th centuries) considered space and time in the context of the universal order of the universe in his treatises on existence and cognition. In his concept, time is a measure of motion associated with change and becoming, while space is a condition for the existence of the physical world. For Farabi, it was important to emphasize that time and space do not exist in isolation but are closely related to the nature of motion and causality. His approach combines the ancient legacy of Aristotle with the Eastern intellectual tradition, creating a foundation for further exploration of the categories of existence in Kazakh and Turkic falsafa.

Abai Kunanbayev (1845-1904) understood the category of time as a moral and existential concept. In his poetic and prose works, time is portrayed as a teacher, a force that tests and strengthens the individual. Abai emphasized the fleeting nature of time and its relentlessness, urging people to cherish every moment and associate it with the concept of spiritual maturity. Abai's space takes on a symbolic character: the steppe and its vast horizons become a reflection of inner freedom, the breadth of the soul, and the human capacity for creation.

Shakarim Kudaiberdyuly (1858-1931), continuing the line of Abai, raised the issue of the relationship between time and eternity. In his works on Falsafa, time is understood as a limited dimension of earthly existence, while eternity is associated with the immortality of the soul and higher spiritual values. For Shakarim, the category of time had a moral significance: it was given to humans as a test in which conscience, truth, and responsibility towards oneself and society were revealed. He understood space not only physically, but also spiritually – as a field in which an individual chooses their path between good and evil.

Mashhyr Zhusip Kopeev (1858-1931) made a significant contribution to the development of Kazakh falsafa, combining elements of the folk worldview with mystical and religious reflections. In his works, space and time are intertwined with

the sacred dimension: earth and sky, past and future are viewed as interconnected spheres that form a holistic perception of the world. Mäshhür Zhusip saw in the categories of space and time not only philosophical, but also spiritual and moral foundations of human existence, linking them with the ideas of predestination, memory, and eternal return.

Thus, an analysis of the legacy of these thinkers shows that Kazakh falsafa has developed its own original understanding of space and time. This understanding is based on a combination of rational ideas (al-Farabi), moral and existential quests (Abai and Shakarim), and spiritual and mystical experiences (Mashhur Zhusip). This tradition forms a unique system of categories that reflect the historical and cultural path of the Kazakh people and their pursuit of harmony between humans, nature, and eternity.

The ideology of Islam had a significant impact on the development of Kazakh philosophy, introducing new spiritual and ethical dimensions to the understanding of space and time. In Islamic tradition, time is seen as a gift from the Almighty, limited for each individual, while space is understood as a created order that manifests divine harmony. These concepts were seamlessly integrated with the nomadic lifestyle of the Kazakhs, creating a unique synthesis of religious, cultural, and philosophical ideas.

Different thinkers have interpreted the categories of space and time in different ways. For example, the famous writer and ethnographer Akhleu Seidimbek associated them with the nomadic civilization, pointing out that it was through fairy tales and oral folk art that the understanding of space as the nomad's living space was transmitted (Seydimbek, 2001: 576). For a nomadic society, spatial orientation and temporal cycles were crucial for survival, regulating their way of life and maintaining harmony with nature.

Living in the steppe required the ability to choose the right place to stay, which is a matter of space. Time, on the other hand, allowed them to determine seasonal pastures, travel schedules, and agricultural practices. Kazakh nomads organized their space in relation to time, moving to zhailau in the summer and returning to qystau in the winter. This demonstrates that space does not exist in isolation but rather changes over time. In Kazakh falsafa, space and time are understood as interconnected and interdependent concepts, where one cannot be fully comprehended without the other.

Traditional culture and the nomadic way of life have become the foundation of Kazakh falsafa, which views space and time as dynamic, changeable, and cyclical categories. The central theme is the interaction between humans and nature, where humans are not seen as rulers but as part of the cosmic and natural order. In nomadic philosophy, space and time encompass both empirical concepts (land, path, and season) and sacred meanings (eternity, fate, and harmony).

Unlike Kazakh falsafa, which views space and time through the lens of culture, worldview, and practical experience, Western philosophy tends to view these categories in abstract and universal terms. From ancient times to the present, Western philosophy has typically viewed time as a linear, progressive, and continuous process. In the Christian worldview, time is understood as a movement from creation to the end of history, from the beginning to the eschaton, which forms the idea of progress and development. In this linear model, Plato associates time with the movement of the celestial spheres, Kant analyzes time as an a priori form of sensory contemplation, and Heidegger shows its fundamental role in human existence. Thus, in Western philosophy, time is established as a category that is independent of specific cultural forms and has universal significance (Amalbekova, 2016: 564).

Kazakh falsafa, based on nomadic experience and traditional worldview practices, perceives time and space in close relationship. The Kazakh language has a range of lexemes that denote different time intervals, reflecting the richness of the temporal worldview. For example, there are concepts such as “moment” (қас-қағым сәт) and “pleasant time” (сәтті уақыт), which capture both the punctual and qualitative aspects of time.

A distinctive feature of the Kazakh worldview is the simultaneous perception of time as linear and cyclical. On the one hand, the idea of the “wheel of return” and the “straight line” expresses the irreversibility of the transition from the past to the future, while on the other hand, the “circle” symbolizes the eternal return. This cyclical model is rooted in Tengrian concepts of nature, where the changing seasons, day, and night were perceived as manifestations of cosmic rhythm. In this context, the term “sunrise” (күн шығы) in Tengrianism had a sacred meaning, and twilight was considered the time when evil spirits appeared. Thus, in the tradition of Kazakh falsafa, the night was perceived as a realm of the other, dangerous, and sacred.

Special attention was paid to transitional time states, such as sunset, which was perceived as an unfavorable moment. Unlike in some other cultures, where the future is associated with the past or with a cycle of predestination, Kazakhs perceive the future as something that lies ahead, in the direction of the road. In the Kazakh world, people live in anticipation of the new and the unknown, while the past remains behind. The philosophical understanding of time in the Kazakh tradition is associated with the image of the road (zhol), which symbolizes the continuous movement, variability, and infinity of the human journey. In this context, time becomes not just a measure of duration, but a space of spiritual experience, destiny, and freedom. Interestingly, even before the arrival of Islam, the Arabic word “zaman” referred to eternity, the endless cycle of day and night, which allowed for a harmonious integration of Tengrian and Islamic perspectives.

Moreover, in Kazakh falsafa, fate and time are understood as interconnected categories that cannot be considered in isolation. Although the terms “time” and “space” were used separately, they have always been intertwined in the mythological, everyday, and historical consciousness of the people. The unique aspect of Kazakh culture is its pursuit of harmony with nature and space, where the steppe, the sky, and the path become philosophical guides. Space was measured not by abstract units, but by the life-categories of the way: the distance that a nomad could walk or ride a horse in a day. The movement of the sun through the түндүк (the smoke hole of the yurt) served as a natural measure of time, connecting the cosmic and domestic dimensions (Kirdina-Chandler, 2018: 73).

In Kazakh falsafa, there are two main forms of time: sacred time and empirical time. Sacred time refers to mythological concepts of the beginning of the world and eternity, and it is not subject to destruction. Empirical time, on the other hand, is associated with the practice of nomadic life, including the calendar, seasons, and daily routines. Nomads used a twelve-year animal calendar, which was also common among other Asian cultures, and divided the year into seven sections based on seasonal activities. The daily time was divided into five parts, which was determined by the rhythm of livestock life and biological cycles. Thus, the measurement of time among the Kazakhs was organically linked to nature and economic activity (Tolstykh, 2018: 13).

The Kazakh worldview formed a vertical three-level model of the world: the upper, middle, and lower levels. In this cosmological scheme, time and

space were not static, but constantly interpenetrated, providing a connection between the past, present, and future. For the nomad, the space of the steppe had not only practical significance, but also symbolized freedom and infinity, while time was perceived as a spiral process that combined cyclical with forward movement. This perception allowed the nomad to experience a unique sense of being immersed in time. His ability to wait, accept inevitable changes, and see them as part of the overall rhythm of the world shaped his philosophical approach to fate. In Kazakh falsafa, fate is not opposed to freedom; rather, it is seen as a small part of a larger cosmos, and this understanding gives individuals inner strength and resilience.

These ideas are also reflected in the works of Kazakh thinkers. Abai viewed time through the category of “gakyl” (reason), associating it with spiritual growth and self-knowledge. Shakarim emphasized the eternity of rukh, arguing that earthly time is merely a temporary form of the soul’s existence. Mashhur Zhusip, combining Islamic tradition and folk wisdom, understood time as a connection between generations and a keeper of memory. In a more universal perspective, Al-Farabi viewed space and time as necessary forms of existence through which the harmony of the cosmos manifests itself.

In Kazakh falsafa, the sky symbolized eternity and the spiritual beginning, while the earth represented life and the material world.

The nomadic lifestyle of many Kazakh clans and tribes had a significant impact on the development of their philosophy of space and time. The concept of limiting the vast expanse of the steppe emerged during the more advanced stages of nomadism. Since the nomadic Kazakhs did not have private or public ownership of land, they did not have the traditional borders associated with states. Nevertheless, in the second stage of nomadism, borders existed mainly for economic reasons: the needs of nomadic pastoralism and the need to change pastures according to the seasons. These borders were less rigid and more mobile than the borders of administrative-territorial units of sedentary states.

Moreover, the authors call this the skill of “movement without movement” and “immobility without statics.” It is capable of accelerating while remaining unhurried. A nomad standing by a river joins its flow rather than simply observing it.

If we consider the territories “under the control” of nomads, they can be reduced to two types: mountains and steppes. Endless space and

upward aspiration. The images of the steppe and the mountains are the leading spatial symbols of traditional Kazakh culture, which have influenced all levels of worldview and activity.

This view of the natural environment of the Kazakh ethnic group allows us to emphasize its exceptional importance as the basis for special spatial perceptions. The first step towards understanding the specific perception of space in traditional Kazakh culture is to study the natural conditions and movement patterns that are shaped by the traditional way of life. In other words, nomadic peoples generally have a worldview that is associated with constant movement. This primarily refers to the perception of movement, first in space and then in time. The entire traditional culture of nomads is based on the idea of continuous movement, which perfectly aligns with their way of life.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics of Kazakh falsafa, it is necessary to compare it with the Western tradition. This comparison allows us to identify not only the differences, but also the points of contact, as well as to show the uniqueness of the Kazakh worldview in the context of global philosophical thought. In Western culture, space and time are often viewed in a universal, abstract, and scientific manner, while in the Kazakh tradition, they are understood through the experience of nomadic life, the oral poetic tradition, and the spiritual values of the people.

Based on this, we will consider three aspects:

- methodological differences;
- the perception of the environment and space;
- the relationship between the categories of time and space and ethics and philosophical practice.

The main difference between the Kazakh and Western philosophies of space and time is their contextual and cultural approach. In the Kazakh tradition, the focus is on the interaction between humans and nature, the cyclical nature of life processes, and the sacred significance of time, while Western thought primarily emphasizes a linear understanding of progress, history, and scientific development. Western philosophy reflects the historical and cultural foundations of Western civilization, while Kazakh falsafa is rooted in the experience of nomadic life, the traditions of the people, and their worldview. If Western thought seeks to methodically and analytically explore space and time (Plato, Kant, Heidegger), then Kazakh falsafa attaches special importance to the oral tradition, poetic word, and closeness to nature. Abai viewed time as a measure of a person’s spiritual

improvement; Shakariim emphasized the idea of the eternity of rukh and moral self-improvement.

These texts express the collective beliefs of the people, their connection to nature and the cosmos, which are reflected in poetry, art, and cultural practices, forming a holistic understanding of time and space as elements of the life journey rather than abstract categories. In contrast, the Western tradition focuses on theoretical and abstract aspects, using scientific methods, mathematical analysis, and physical models to uncover universal laws that are independent of specific cultures. Kazakh falsafa views space and time as part of the natural and cosmic order. For a nomad, space is the steppe, the road, and the horizon, and time is the changing of day and night, the seasons, and the cycles of

herding. Here, harmony is important: a person does not dominate nature, but lives in its rhythms.

In Western philosophy, space and time are often viewed in an applied and scientific context, with a focus on their potential for technological development and the rational organization of society. Kazakh falsafa, on the other hand, integrates time and space with moral principles: time is understood not only as a measure, but also as a test of human conscience, while space is not only a physical territory, but also a spiritual field where individuals can assert their valor, dignity, and harmony. In contrast, the Western tradition tends to separate the scientific and ethical dimensions: what is the subject of science is not always related to moral search (Table 1).

Table 1 – Comparative Approaches to Understanding Space and Time in Kazakh and Western Philosophy

Approach	Kazakh falsafa	Western Philosophy
Contextual	Based on nomadic way of life, interaction of man and nature, cyclicity of time and sacredness of space.	Based on the history of Western civilization, a linear understanding of time and progress, and abstract models.
Methodological	Oral tradition (zhyr, myths, legends), poetic word, connection with culture and spiritual practices.	Theoretical and abstract analysis, scientific method, logic, mathematics, and physics.
Ethical	Space and time are connected with moral principles: conscience, dignity, harmony of man and nature.	Ethics and science are separated; space and time are considered neutral scientific categories.

A comparative analysis shows that cultural, historical, and methodological differences have shaped the unique trajectories of Kazakh and Western philosophy. While Western thought creates universal models of the world, Kazakh philosophy roots space and time in the people's experience, culture, and spiritual practices.

To understand how contemporary Kazakhstani society perceives the concepts of "space" and "time," a sociological study was conducted using an associative survey. The study involved 50 respondents, primarily third- and fourth-year philosophy students.

The participants were asked to provide free associations to two key concepts: "space" and "time." This method allows for the capture of not only scientific or abstract ideas, but also the deep cultural, symbolic, and emotional images that are characteristic of the mass consciousness.

The responses were analyzed using frequency analysis, which helped identify the most consistent and

recurring associations. The data was then grouped into semantic clusters: natural-cosmic, socio-practical, value-metaphorical, and personal-existential. Frequency analysis allowed us to identify two predominant clusters and a group of other responses (Table 2).

Integral output on «space». Cultural representation includes:

- geometric-cosmic characteristics (sphere, volume, height, width, length, coordinates, equator, azimuth, latitude, longitude, stars, atmosphere);
- landscape-existential images (steppe, horizon, width/narrowness, space);
- metaphor of the way (the road as a scheme of movement and orientation in the world).

This profile is consistent with the focus of Kazakh philosophy on the relationship between humans and nature, and on the practice of the path as a means of exploring space.

Associations with the concept of «time». Two large clusters and a group of other responses are also highlighted (Table 3).

Table 2 – Associations with the concept of «space»

Associations	Number of respondents	Typical answers	Meaning
Global-cosmic and natural representations	34% of respondents (≈ 17 people)	steppe, space, sphere, earth, sun, moon, sky, width, horizon, magnitude, narrowness, space, boundlessness, infinity, universe, planet	space is perceived as an objective natural-cosmic givenness and as boundlessness; the emphasis on the steppe highlights the rootedness of these representations in nomadic experience
Concrete-practical and value-symbolic representations	42% of respondents (≈ 21 people)	air, nature, atmosphere, road, value, property, freedom, greatness, darkness, thought, dream, beauty, emptiness, abstraction, light, azimuth, latitude, longitude, death, faith, infinity	space is grasped as a field of life and a path (road), as well as as the coordinates of action (navigational terms) and the value-spiritual dimension (freedom, faith, and beauty).
Other and scattered responses	24% of respondents (≈ 12 people)	Include individual associations of low frequency; confirm the multi-level nature of representations	

Table 3 – Associations with the concept of «time»

Associations	Number of respondents	Typical answers	Meaning
Basic chronological and life markers	42% of respondents (≈ 21 people)	clock, life, day, years, past, future, present, night, dawn	time is experienced as a linear sequence and as a framework for the life cycle (day, years).
Qualitative-processual and metaphorical representations	36% of respondents (≈ 18 people)	period, road, week, air, space, moment, eternity, century, stage, childhood, speed, stop, history, events, life stages, date, news, arrows, numbers, mode, limitation, money, love, river, circle, interval, place.	time is thought of as a path/road, a flow/river, a circle (cyclical), as well as a mode and limitation (the normative side of time) and a value (in the context of life and love).
Other and scattered answers	22% of respondents (≈ 11 people)	Support the idea of the polymodality of temporal experience	

Integral conclusion on “time”. Representations combine:

- linearity (past–present–future, calendar and hour markers);
- cyclical (circle, dawn/night, life stages);
- dynamics of the path (road, river, speed/stop).

Thus, in the minds of the youth sample, time is both linear and cyclical, which corresponds to the key motif of Kazakh Falsafa: the combination of spiral movement with the eternal return of natural and life rhythms.

Levels of representation of “space” (according to the respondents’ answers)

Environmental objects: steppe, moon, sun, sky, horizon, air, and nature.

Metaphorical-cosmic images: abstraction, faith, light, death, infinity, universe, planet, emptiness, boundless world.

Mental/personal space (emotional-value categories): greatness, dear/valuable, personal, thought, emptiness, freedom, property, darkness, value, beauty.

This three-tiered model describes the transition from the physical through the symbolic to the existential-value dimension, which is characteristic of Kazakh falsafa, which roots abstract categories in life experience.

Comparison and interpretation in the logic of Kazakh falsafa

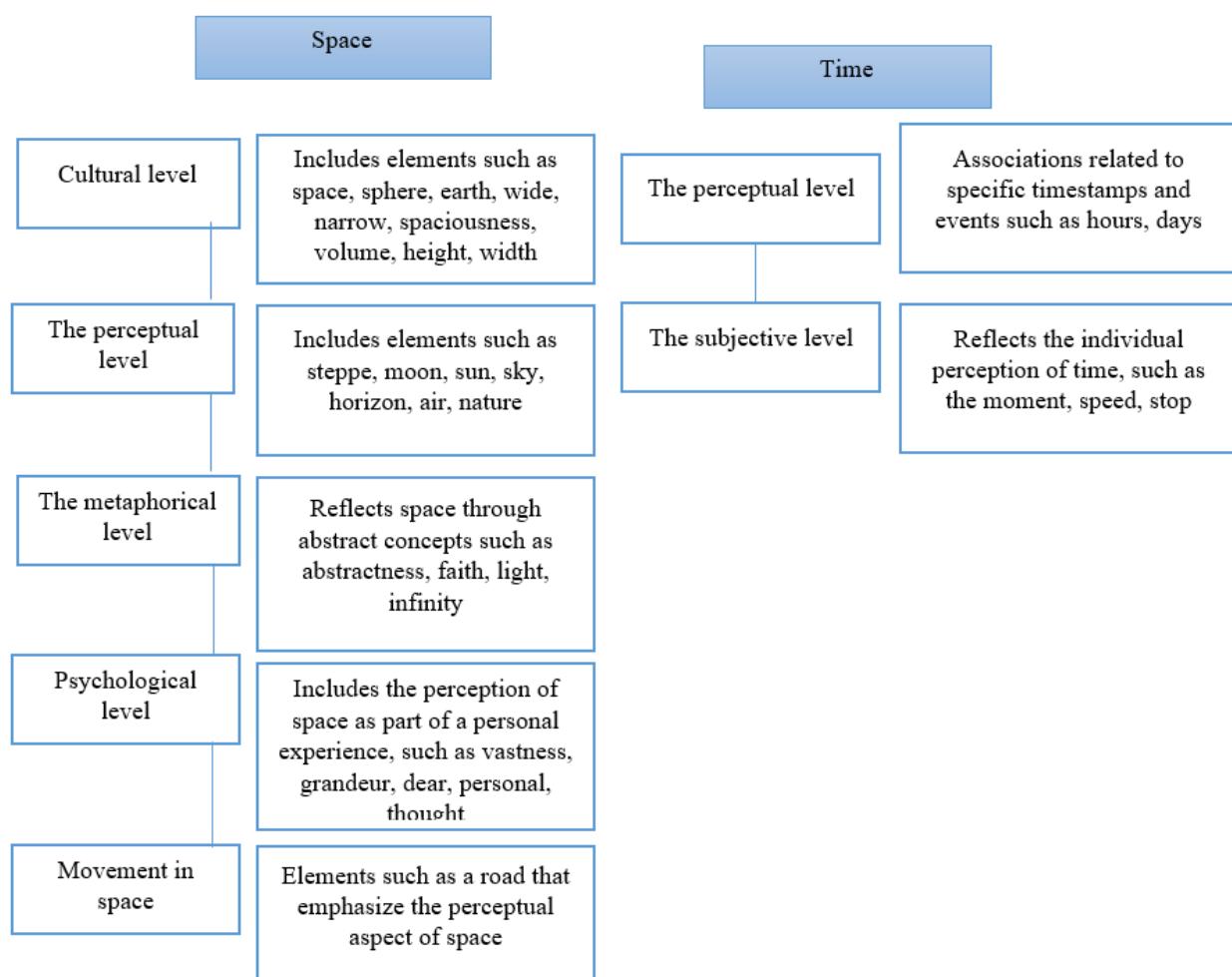


Figure 1 – The model of the concept of space and time in Kazakh falsafa

The repetition of the image of the road in both blocks (both for “space” and for “time”) indicates a basic cultural metaphor of the path: time is experienced as a road; space is experienced as a field of movement. The presence of both linear and cyclical associations with time is consistent with the nomadic rhythm of life (seasons, migrations, and daily cycles) and with the philosophical image of a spiral (moving forward through returning to the origins).

The prevalence of natural-cosmic and landscape images in the concept of “space” confirms the rootedness of these ideas in the steppe horizon and harmony with nature, which are central to Kazakh falsafa. The strong layer of value-based, moral, and existential associations (freedom, faith, beauty, life, and love) demonstrates that both “time” and “space” in popular perception carry ethical and spiritual meaning, rather than just a physical measure. This aligns with the focus of Kazakh falsafa on conscience, dignity, and harmony. The survey confirmed that in the modern youth environment, the categories of “space” and “time” are represented at multiple levels: as a natural and cosmic givenness, as a life path, and as a spiritual and value field. This profile corresponds to the key principles of Kazakh falsafa, which emphasize the connection between humans and nature, the cyclical nature of existence, and the ethical significance of fundamental categories.

Respondents demonstrated differences in the ways of representing time at the perceptual level, associated with associations:

Internal process of a person. Time is perceived as an internal experience associated with sensations and states. Characteristics that characterize time: cold, youth, warmth, scarcity, excess, moment, instant, completeness, invisibility, interval, speed, stop, timer, transience, and limitation.

A sequence of simultaneous events. Time is understood as a sequence of phenomena that shape the rhythm of everyday life: clocks, work,

swimming, news, routines, leisure, expenses, studying, breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack, dinner, noon, midnight, waiting, and events.

Thus, the multi-level integrated model provides a deeper understanding of how Kazakhstani citizens perceive and understand the categories of space and time, combining traditional concepts with modern reality.

Conclusion

The study has shown that the categories of space and time in Kazakh falsafa have not only a theoretical, but also a deeply practical, ideological, and cultural significance. Unlike the Western tradition, which emphasizes the linearity of time, its abstractness, and universality, Kazakh thought explores these categories through the lens of nomadic lifestyle, sacred beliefs, and human harmony with nature. In Kazakh philosophy, space is understood as a steppe, a road, or a path, while time is seen as a cyclical and linear process that is closely linked to natural rhythms, social life, and spiritual values.

The empirical part of the study, based on a survey of philosophy students, confirmed that modern ideas about space and time preserve the cultural archetypes of traditional philosophy, while also reflecting the influence of globalization and modern scientific concepts. The associations of respondents with these categories show that for young people, they remain inextricably linked to nature, history, and spirituality, but also acquire new symbolic meanings that reflect the changing society.

Thus, the Kazakh falsafa of space and time forms a unique model of worldview that combines traditional values and modern approaches. It allows us to gain a deeper understanding not only of the cultural identity of the Kazakh people, but also of universal philosophical questions about the place of man in the universe, his path, and his destiny.

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