

# ОНТОЛОГИЯ И ТЕОРИЯ ПОЗНАНИЯ

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## GENERALLY RECOGNIZED SCIENTIFIC CATEGORIES AS A THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BASIS FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH. PART IV

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### **Abstract**

**Aim.** Based on philosophical methodology, consider in detail the content of some general scientific (philosophical) categories “separate”, “individual”, “special”, “universal” (that is, categories reflecting the delimitation of some phenomena from others), the categories “identity”, “difference”, “opposite”, “contradiction”, “struggle” (categories reflecting the process of comparing the characteristics of phenomena), “change”, “movement”, “development”, “progress”, “regression” (categories reflecting the transition from one qualitative state of being to another) and define them in a modern edition.

**Methodology.** The work was carried out based on a systematic approach using classification methods and comparative analysis.

**Results.** Research within the framework of the system of philosophical categories because of cognitive activity, which is a systematization of information about a phenomenon and the naming of this phenomenon, is still relevant today. The categories reflect the characteristics of phenomena of a certain class, record the essential properties of the phenomena and the connections between them. In addition, based on the content of general scientific categories, methods of cognition are formed. They also have a general scientific character and participate in all scientific research without exception. This fact gives special importance to understanding the essence of general scientific (philosophical) categories, which, working to solve problems of scientific research, are transformed into methods of scientific research. This circumstance determines the need for a detailed presentation of the content of general scientific (philosophical) categories in their modern edition.

**Research implications.** The results of the study can be used to improve the methodological competencies of both teachers of philosophical disciplines and students.

**Keywords:** separate, individual, special, universal, identity, difference, opposition, contradiction, struggle, change, movement, development, progress, regression

## ОБЩЕПРИЗНАННЫЕ НАУЧНЫЕ КАТЕГОРИИ КАК ТЕОРЕТИКО-МЕТОДОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ БАЗИС НАУЧНЫХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ. ЧАСТЬ IV

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### Аннотация

**Цель.** На основе философской методологии детально рассмотреть содержание некоторых общенаучных (философских) категорий «отдельное», «единичное», «особенное», «всеобщее» (т. е. категорий, отражающих ограниченность одних явлений от других), категорий «тождество», «различие», «противоположность», «противоречие», «борьба» (категорий, отражающих процесс сравнения признаков феноменов), «изменение», «движение», «развитие», «прогресс», «регресс» (категорий, отражающих переход из одного качественного состояния бытия в другое) и дать им определение в современной редакции.

**Процедура и методы.** Работа выполнена на основе системного подхода с использованием методов классификации и сравнительного анализа.

**Результаты.** Исследования в рамках системы философских категорий как результата познавательной деятельности, представляющей собой систематизацию сведений о каком-либо явлении и назывании этого явления, сегодня по-прежнему актуальны. В категориях отражаются признаки явлений определённого класса, фиксируются существенные свойства явлений и связи между ними. Кроме того, на основе содержания общенаучных категорий формируются приёмы познания. Они также имеют общенаучный характер, участвуют во всех без исключения научных исследованиях. Этот факт придаёт особое значение пониманию сути общенаучных (философских) категорий, которые, работая на решение задач научных исследований, трансформируются в приёмы научного исследования. Данное обстоятельство детерминирует необходимость детального представления содержания общенаучных (философских) категорий в их современной редакции.

**Теоретическая и/или практическая значимость.** Результаты исследования могут быть использованы в совершенствовании методологических компетенций как у преподавателей философских дисциплин, так и у обучающихся.

**Ключевые слова:** отдельное, единичное, особенное, всеобщее, тождество, различие, противоположность, противоречие, борьба, изменение, движение, развитие, прогресс, регресс

### Introduction

In modern scientific research (and this cannot but cause justified concern), a kind of “methodological fashion” has developed – a “fashion” for the mandatory use of certain “fashionable” methodologies, which often have not yet fully proven their true scientific status. This weakens scientific research. Among such “fashionable” methodological schools (without denying their significance,

objecting to the exaggeration of their research capabilities) should be mentioned: abstractionism, globalism, dogmatism, synergism, structuralism, functionalism, evolutionism, and others. It is obvious that exaggerating the role of these methodologies weakens the methodological culture of scientific research. More carefully it is necessary to immerse yourself in the categorical apparatus of scientific research.

### **Categories “separate”, “single”, “special”, “universal”**

Each real phenomenon can be legitimately considered as existing separately from others. Thus, there is a need to introduce into scientific circulation a category that reflects the essence of the named fact. This category is the “separate” category. Since all phenomena, one way or another, to a greater or lesser extent, are isolated from others, the category that reflects the essence of this phenomenon deservedly takes its place in the system of philosophical categories.

In modern scientific literature it is rightly noted that “separate” is a synonym for the concept of “thing”, that is, a relatively isolated, qualitatively defined fragment of existence<sup>1</sup>. We do not have any grounds for criticizing the above definition of the category “separate,” since it captures the essence of the facts of a certain delimitation of phenomena.

The category “separate” is rightly placed on a par with the categories “individual”, “special”, “universal”. Moreover, it is considered as a key concept that reveals the content of the above categories: “The categories of individual, special and universal are a reflection of the relative independence of things, phenomena of existence, their diversity and unity. The key concept that reveals the content of these categories is the concept of the separate”<sup>2</sup>.

We must agree that the categories “separate”, “single”, “special”, “general” (“universal”) are closely related, stand on the same page, and complement each other’s understanding. At the same time, there is hardly any reason not to distinguish between the specifics of their content. And such attempts exist in science. The categories “separate” and “single” are most often identified. In particular, in one of the sources we read: “In our consideration, the individual and the separate are considered as synonyms”<sup>3</sup>. There is hardly any need for comments here. In a veiled form, this position

is found in the following wording: “The individual (private) is separate, limited in time and space, isolated from all others”<sup>4</sup>.

The vast majority of researchers rightly qualify the category “single” as a concept that reflects in an object or phenomenon that which is inherent only in this object or phenomenon. Many authors rightly clarify: the individual carries within itself the uniqueness of phenomena, which makes it possible to distinguish it from all other phenomena, which constitutes its individuality and quantitative certainty. In a word, the individual is a philosophical category that reflects the fact of the uniqueness and inimitability of each phenomenon of reality. There are no particular differences in the approaches of researchers to the category “special”. They associate its content with the presence of aspects and properties in phenomena that determine their belonging and unity with phenomena of a certain class.

In a word, the special is a category that reflects the facts of the generality of phenomena of certain classes. Finally, you should pay attention to the essence of the category “universal”. There is every reason to qualify the category “universal” as a philosophical concept that reflects the presence of properties and characteristics inherent in all phenomena of reality. This point of view is presented in the literature.

Along with it, there are positions that replace the category “universal” with the category “general”, which, it seems, is not fundamental if we consider them identical, as the authors of the following point of view do: “General is a philosophical category that captures the similarity of properties, aspects individual objects and phenomena”<sup>5</sup>. The situation is often aggravated by reducing the essence of the category “universal” to a concept reflecting the commonality of characteristics and phenomena of a certain class, that is, to the content of the category “special”. There is no reason not to see the unity of the contents

<sup>1</sup> Бучило А. Ф., Исаев И. А. История и философия науки: учебное пособие. М.: Проспект, 2021. С. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Бучило Н. Ф., Чумаков А. Н. Философия: учебник. М.: ПЕР СЭ, 2001. С. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Тарасов Ю. Н. Философия: учебное пособие. М.: МПСИ: МОДЭК, 2006. С. 459.

<sup>4</sup> Моисеева Н. А., Сорокикова В. А. Философия: краткий курс. СПб.: Питер, 2010. С. 148.

<sup>5</sup> Философия: учебник / под. ред. З. Т. Фокиной. М.: Вузовская книга, 2012. С. 234–235.

of these categories and to deny their dialectical connections. However, there is no basis for their identification. The category “universal” reflects the fact of the unity of all phenomena of reality, the presence of the same properties and characteristics in them.

### **Categories “identity”, “difference”, “opposite”, “contradiction”, “struggle”**

Having accumulated information about the cognizable phenomenon, its essential characteristics, understanding its interaction with the environment and other phenomena, comparing its signs with the signs of other phenomena, let us turn our attention to the problem of their identity and difference. First, however, we will have to decide on the philosophical categories “identity” and “difference”.

What does the scientific literature say about these categories? In one of the encyclopedic sources we read: “Identity is a category expressing equality, the sameness of an object (thing, process, etc.) with itself or the equality of several objects”<sup>1</sup>. In the main, we can agree with this understanding of identity. It is opposed to difference. The latter is very often interpreted as a relationship of discrepancy between the properties of the same object with a predominance of properties preserved from the previous state.

In science, identity is often considered the initial stage of the development of a contradiction, as a relation of sameness, the similarity of a thing to itself or to other things. The classical interpretation of the essence of the category “difference” sounds like this: difference is “a relationship of dissimilarity, non-coincidence with oneself, with other things, phenomena, parties”<sup>2</sup>.

Perhaps, one should agree with this understanding of the essence of the identities and differences of phenomena, noting that the category “identity” reflects the essence of sameness, the coincidence of internal and

external characteristics of phenomena, and the category “difference” reflects the essence of their discrepancy and dissimilarity. In a word, “difference” is a category that reflects the universal property of phenomena not to coincide with each other in their internal and external characteristics. It is our deep conviction that understanding the identity and differences of phenomena and their relationships plays a major role in the formation of contradictions. In a word, it is the basis for understanding the essence of contradictions [5; 7].

How are contradictions interpreted in modern literature? One of the encyclopedic sources states: “Contradiction, ... A logical relationship between judgments, one of which excludes another that is incompatible with it”.<sup>3</sup>

As you can see, in this edition we are talking about logical contradictions, and they are considered as mutually exclusive opposites. It seems to us that those researchers who believe that contradictions are interactions of opposites, but opposites that are in a state of mutual exclusion, are more accurate in understanding the essence of contradictions, and, at the same time, in internal unity and interpenetration. This point of view is quite widely represented in the scientific literature. Agreeing in the main with the given understanding of the essence of contradictions, we nevertheless note that in relations of mutual exclusion and complementarity there are identical and differing elements, fragments, aspects of phenomena. This gives us the right to state that contradictions arise where and when opposites interact, and these are the identity and difference of phenomena. Thus, the philosophical category “contradiction” reflects the essence of interactions between identical and differing aspects of phenomena [1; 2].

It would seem that we can put an end to this and complete our reflections on the essence of contradictions, but this can hardly be done without defining our attitude to the essence of the category “opposite”, since in the overwhelming majority of cases the category

<sup>1</sup> Бучило Н. Ф., Чумаков А. Н. Философия: учебник. М.: ПЕР СЭ, 2001. С. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Данильян О. Г., Тараненко В. М. Философия: учебник. М.: Эксмо, 2005. С. 223.

<sup>3</sup> Большой толковый словарь русских существительных / сост. Л. Г. Бабенко. М.: АСТ-Пресс, 2008. С. 165.

“contradiction” is interpreted with its use. Moreover, in the literature one can find a definition of the category “opposite”, which is actually identical to the definition of the category “contradiction”. It is obvious that contradictions and opposites are phenomena of the same order, interconnected and interpenetrating into each other, but still different. This difference becomes especially obvious when opposites are interpreted as phenomena that are maximally, extremely different from each other. In other words, as phenomena “located in a given space and time in a state of minimal identity and maximum difference”<sup>1</sup>.

In addition, it is known that interacting opposites are always in a state of struggle with each other. “Struggle” is a philosophical category that reflects the interaction of opposites. If we imagine this category through contradictions, then we can state the fact: opposites are phenomena that are in a state of extreme contradiction with each other.

### **Categories “change”, “movement”, “development”, “progress”, “regression”**

Reflecting on the essence of the categories “identity”, “difference”, “opposite”, “contradiction” and “struggle”, one cannot but emphasize that a correct understanding of their essence forms the basis for determining the content of the next block of categories, namely philosophical categories: “change”, “movement”, “development”, “progress” and “regression”. This dependence is not difficult to understand if we consider contradiction as the source of all development.

So, let's pay attention to the essence of the category “change”. In one of the encyclopedic sources you can find the following conclusion: “Change is a transformation into another, a transition from one qualitatively defined being to a qualitatively different defined being”<sup>2</sup>. As you can see, its authors connect the essence of changes with the quality of phenomena, that is,

with the internal processes occurring in them. There is reason to believe that this approach narrows the understanding of change. As reality shows, they are subject to both internal and external signs of phenomena [3; 6].

Moreover, some researchers believe: “Change is an essential sign of movement and development, the process of the emergence of differences, the disappearance of some and the appearance of other aspects (properties, connections, relationships) in any object, the transition of an object from one state to another”<sup>3</sup>.

While generally agreeing with the proposed understanding of the essence of changes, we nevertheless note that it is hardly worth asserting that changes are always associated with the transition of a phenomenon from one state to another. Reality shows that changes occur permanently and continuously in phenomena and not all of them lead them to new, different states. If we keep this in mind, it becomes clear that the following definition more accurately reflects change: “Change” is a philosophical category that reflects the fact of the emergence of some and the disappearance of others differences between phenomena or their states<sup>4</sup>.

However, the essence of changes can be determined not only through differences, but also through the identity of phenomena. In this case, the formulation of the category “change” will sound as follows: “change” is a category that reflects the process of the emergence and disappearance of similarities between phenomena or their states.

Change is organically connected with movement, as a specific process of being. Let's see what modern literature says about the movement.

Firstly, the overwhelming majority of sources direct us towards understanding the organic unity of movement and change.

Secondly, in many works movement is interpreted as any change occurring in nature, society, and people's thinking. We

<sup>1</sup> Кокорин А. А. Методология научных исследований: учебное пособие. М.: Московский государственный областной университет, 2015. С. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Философский энциклопедический словарь / ред.-сост. Е. Ф. Губский. М.: ИНФРА-М, 2009. С. 171.

<sup>3</sup> Данильян О. Г., Тараненко В. М. Философия: учебник. М.: Эксмо, 2005. С. 485.

<sup>4</sup> Кокорин А. А. Методология научных исследований: учебное пособие. М.: Московский государственный областной университет, 2015. С. 212.

provide evidence on this matter: "Movement is a philosophical category to designate any changes, transformations taking place in nature, society, and people's thinking"<sup>1</sup>.

Thirdly, movement is often considered not just as a change, but also as a transition of phenomena from one state to another. This approach, in our opinion, leads to the identification of closely related, but still different processes of movement and development. This conclusion will become especially clear once the essence of the category "development" is defined.

Fourthly, in science there are detailed definitions of the essence of movement, indicating its difference from development. Here is one of them: "... movement is interpreted as a process of any changes, transformations that can be progressive, carried out from lower to higher, from simple to complex, regressive, associated with degradation, partial disintegration of the system, disintegration of its functions, cyclical, associated with reproduction relatively stable system of connections and relationships, then the concept of development includes a slightly different content"<sup>2</sup>.

Paying tribute to all researchers of such a phenomenon as movement, we note that it seems to us the most correct conclusion that "movement" is a philosophical category that reflects the essence of all changes occurring in phenomena, both internal and external, significant and inessential, qualitative and quantitative, spatial and temporal. Understanding the essence of the category "movement" is the basis for a strict approach to the essence of such a phenomenon as development and the categories that reflect its essence.

Analysis of scientific literature allows us to see several nuances in approaches to defining the essence of the category "development" [4; 8; 9].

<sup>1</sup> Философия: учебник / под. ред. З. Т. Фокиной. М.: Вузовская книга, 2012. С. 210; Данильян О. Г., Тараненко В. М. Философия: учебник. М.: Эксмо, 2005. С. 80; Бучило Н. Ф., Чумаков А. Н. Философия: учебник. М.: ПЕР СЭ, 2001. С. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Философия: учебник / под. ред. З. Т. Фокиной. М.: Вузовская книга, 2012. С. 287–288.

Nuance 1. Development is interpreted as a necessary, natural movement, a change in something over time. The emphasis on understanding development as a necessary, natural change is fair, but this is not enough to meaningfully present the essence of development.

Nuance 2. It is defended by researchers who point out that development is always directed, irreversible, natural, and necessarily qualitative changes in phenomena. In this regard, we will give one of the illustrations: "... development is a certain form of change in general, a special type of movement, which is characterized by natural, directed, irreversible, qualitative changes in material objects"<sup>3</sup>. In our opinion, the remark that development differs from movement as such, since it concerns changes precisely in the quality of phenomena, is very important and productive. The same point of view, in a more detailed version, is defended by scientists who believe that development is "always the beginning and end of changes over time, the certainty of changes, the presence of changes, both within a given quality, and the transition from one quality to another"<sup>4</sup>.

Nuance 3: Often, development is interpreted only as progress, progressive qualitative changes. In one of the sources we read: "Development means, first of all, progressive qualitative changes. Development caused by the contradictions of the system is a natural, qualitative, irreversible, directional change in material or ideal phenomena, processes, states"<sup>5</sup>. There are other proponents of a similar approach to development.

In a word, we are ready to agree that development is indeed a necessary, irreversible, natural, qualitative change in phenomena.

<sup>3</sup> Данильян О. Г., Тараненко В. М. Философия: учебник. М.: Эксмо, 2005. С. 110; Бучило Н. Ф., Чумаков А. Н. Философия: учебник. М.: ПЕР СЭ, 2001. С. 74; Бучило А. Ф., Исаев И. А. История и философия науки: учебное пособие. М.: Проспект, 2021. С. 100; Моисеева Н. А., Сороковикова В. А. Философия: краткий курс. СПб.: Питер, 2010. С. 155.

<sup>4</sup> Тарасов Ю. Н. Философия: учебное пособие. М.: МПСИ, МОДЭК, 2006. С. 448.

<sup>5</sup> Философия: учебник / под. ред. З. Т. Фокиной. М.: Вузовская книга, 2012. С. 288.

This is true. But it is hardly possible to agree that development is necessarily a progressive change. In our opinion, development can be both progressive and regressive. This becomes more understandable after understanding the essence of such phenomena as progress and regression.

Let's see how they are interpreted in the scientific literature.

Progress, progressive development, is usually defined as movement, development, direction of development "from lower to higher, from less perfect to more perfect"<sup>1</sup>. And this is fair, just as the use of the concept of "progressive development" is fair.

There is every reason to consider regression as a movement, a development opposite to progress. Researchers who use the phrase "regressive development" act quite correctly. Thus, one of the sources gives the following definition: "Regressive development (Latin regressus – reverse movement) is the transition of an object from a qualitative state of the highest degree of complexity to another qualitative state of the lowest degree of complexity"<sup>2</sup>.

So, "development" is a category that reflects changes in the qualities of a phenomenon.

"Progress" is a category that reflects development, characterized by a transition from simpler qualities to more complex, more perfect ones. "Regression" is a category that reflects development in the opposite direction to progress.

## Conclusion

Thus, on the basis of philosophical methodology, we examined in detail the content of some general scientific (philosophical) categories "separate", "individual", "special", "universal" (that is, categories reflecting the delimitation of some phenomena from others), the categories "identity", "difference", "opposite", "contradiction", "struggle" (categories reflecting the process of comparing the characteristics of phenomena), "change", "movement", "development", "progress", "regression" (categories reflecting the transition from one qualitative state of being into another) and define them in a modern edition. At the end of the cycle "generally recognized scientific categories", we will consider the content and logical relationship of the categories "space" and "time".

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<sup>1</sup> Большой толковый словарь русских существительных / сост. Л. Г. Бабенко. М.: АСТ-Пресс, 2008. С. 303.

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