

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)  
Space Culture – Public Engagement in Space through Culture (9)

Author: Dr. Marie-Luise Heuser  
Space Renaissance International, Germany, m.l.heuser@gmx.net

SPACE CULTURE AND SPACE PHILOSOPHY

**Abstract**

Contemporary philosophy and art, at least in Europe, is influenced by phenomenology and fundamental ontology, both specific philosophical schools of thought that are explicitly anti-Copernican and strive for an earthly "re-rooting" of man. It is therefore not surprising that since the 1960s, at least in Europe, cultural studies, social sciences, and the humanities have generally been only marginally concerned with the subject of space travel.

Today's technical spaceflight, on the other hand, is based on a long cultural history of space travel "with the wings of the spirit", which, beginning with Plato's sky chariot, cognitively opened up outer space to humans. The Copernican Revolution in the Renaissance made virtual space flights possible and inspired eminent thinkers to make imaginative trips to the moon. In the art of the time, this new "space revolution" was expressed in planetary perspectives. Later, in classical German philosophy, expanded space consciousness was combined with an evolutionary perspective and the idea of a process of freedom that would detach humanity from Earth and make it cosmic citizens. Universal anthropology then found expression in the art of Romanticism.

My thesis was and is to counter the widespread new geocentrism in the humanities, a return to the beginnings and long history of space thinking is necessary. When I began building an international collaboration on culture and space in 2004, I realized that in the absence of modern approaches, a return to history was essential to develop a viable modern philosophy of space. In the process, I discovered that in addition to the long literary history, there was also a long philosophical history of spaceflight in classical philosophy since antiquity. This was researched by me and developed for teaching at the university of Braunschweig in the form of transdisciplinary curricula and then used for public education in the form of lecture series and conferences. In 2010, "The Society for Space Culture" was founded, whose statutes state, among other things: "to research, document, reflect, discuss, publish, artistically design, and anchor the diverse interdisciplinary connections between culture and space in education." In this context, also the Space Poetry series was developed and has been praised by national media as a new genre and successful event format.

Since 2021, I have been making my research on the history of the classical philosophy of spaceflight since antiquity available to the International Space Renaissance Group in order to establish an academy.