

The Concept of Reflection: Genesis and Typology

Rozin Vadim Markovich*

Professor, Chief Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia

***Corresponding Author:** Rozin Vadim Markovich, Professor, Chief Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia.

Received: November 07, 2023; **Published:** December 04, 2023

Abstract

The article presents the genesis of the concept of reflection. The prerequisites for the formation of this concept in the works of Aristotle and Nicholas of Cusa and the actual stages of development of this concept in the philosophy of modern times differ. The concepts of reflection 1.0 are characterized. in the works of Locke, 2.0. works of thinkers of German classical philosophy (Kant and Hegel), 3.0. in the research of G.P. Shchedrovitsky. Two understandings of reflection are separated: understood as a mechanism of development of the individual, belonging to his personality, and as a process leading to another integrity. The idea of moral reflection is introduced.

Keywords: Reflection; Concepts; Thinking; Reconstruction; Personality; Individual; Development; Formation; Schemes; History

Introduction

The founders of discursivity in modern psychology and pedagogy have always paid attention to reflection, understanding it as a mechanism of personality development that occurs under the influence of education. "Theoretically, the role of reflection in mental development", write Igor Semenov and Sergei Stepanov, in the article "Reflection in the organization of creative thinking and personal self-development", takes into account L.S. Vygotsky, who believes that "new types of connections and correlations of functions presuppose as their basis reflection, reflection of one's own processes in consciousness", and S.L. Rubinstein, who emphasizes that "the emergence of consciousness is associated with the separation from life and direct experience of reflection on the world around us and on oneself" [2, p. 141; 17, p. 260; 18, p. 35].

But theoretically, the concept of reflection in pedagogy was poorly developed, which has now led to its erosion, it began to be used in different ways and, most importantly, came down to a simple awareness of one's own or someone else's activity. Just one example, a characteristic of M.V.'s reflection. Zakharchenko: "So, when we talk about reflection in pedagogy, we are interested in: a) reflection as a universal human activity, b) the special nature of the subject of this activity as an expression of a specific pedagogical cross-section of human existence: this is how I propose to look at our world of pedagogy - how at the cross-section of culture, on a par with political, economic, artistic, etc. c) a series of images of this objective activity: only based on the presence of such a series - and from its recognition as such - can we then talk about what interests each practical teacher: about the types of pedagogical reflection, methods of teacher reflective activity, technologies - or, to narrow the task - the rules for constructing a reflexive field in the pedagogical process. So, in my opinion, it is already clear: reflection in pedagogy is a source of theoretical pedagogical knowledge" [5].

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this work is to renew a more rigorous understanding of reflection, for which we will make an excursion into the history of this concept and offer several distinctions. In terms of genre, it will be, on the one hand, a reconstruction of the ideas of thinkers who introduced reflection, and on the other, a methodological discourse. Many people have written about reflection, but within the framework of the discourse we will talk only about those who, in our opinion, set the mainstream in this area of thinking.

Aristotle’s invention of the scheme of reflection

In the metaphysics we encounter a discourse that, in retrospect, can be called the first “scheme of reflection”. “After all, the being of thought and the object of thought”, writes Aristotle, “are not the same thing. The point, however, is that in some cases... the object of thought and the mind are not different from each other... we will have here an identity and the thought will be one with the object of thought. “At the same time, the mind, by virtue of its involvement in the object of thought, thinks of itself: it becomes thinkable by contacting and thinking, so that one and the same thing is the mind and what is thought by it”. “So the world of heaven and nature depend on such a beginning... We affirm that God is a living being, eternal, the best... Reason thinks of itself, since we have the best in it, and its thought is thinking about thinking” [1, p. 211, 215].

Let us pay attention to two points: firstly, the subject of Aristotelian reflection was “Reason” (God), and not the individual, and secondly, this narrative (discourse) in the author’s concept is a “scheme”. The latter is defined by me as a semiotic construction (invention) that allows one to resolve a problematic situation. The scheme sets a new reality, allows you to understand what is happening and build a new action. In this case, I assume that Aristotle built a scheme of reflection to explain how Reason as the “prime mover” and how the cause of the movement of planets moves these planets.

Intelligence	Problem situation	Scheme of reflection	New action
God (prime mover)	How to explain the reason for the movement of planets	Thinking ↓ Thinking	Explanation of planetary motion

Table 1

Perhaps Aristotle reasoned approximately as follows. The reason for a person’s movements is his thought, which Stagirite writes about in his work “On the Soul”. There is no one in the sky except God and the moving planets, therefore, the thought of God (Mind) is the reason for their movement. What does Reason think about in terms of content? Is it not the very movement of the planets that causes this movement? It turns out that he thinks about his thinking. But isn’t Aristotle’s Reason similar to himself, aware of his thinking in the form of thinking again?

God as a guiding authority, angels and the human mind as intermediaries (scheme of medieval reflection)

In the Middle Ages, the following value series of forms of existence was established: God - angels (saints) - man. Man, created “in the image and likeness” of God, is now thought of, on the one hand, as possessing reason and free will, and on the other, natural passions. Moreover, the mind is from God, and bodily passions are of purely human (or devilish) origin. For our topic, such a character as a guardian angel is important. Let us remember Lermontov:

An angel flew across the midnight sky
And he sang a quiet song...
He carried the young soul in his arms

For a world of sadness and tears.

And the sound of his song in the soul is young

Left without words, but alive...



Figure 1: Warts in the back.

Guardian angels (like personal saints) performed curious functions: on the one hand, they were conductors of the will of God, transmitting to the “human mind” divine plans, its spirit; on the other hand, it is a kind of medieval figure of reflection. Indeed, a guardian angel can be aware of all a person’s actions (sees him through), and this is not just a thoughtless reflection of a person’s activities (as in a mirror), but a divine, reasonable vision that works for the development of a person as a spiritual being. True, the second component of reflection (reasonable) so far belongs to man only partially, but mainly to the angel and God. The pattern of reflection in this case is sacred: the guardian angel in the soul coincides with the person and at the same time, as a sacred being, is outside him in spiritual space, contemplating and guiding his ward. It is clear that behind the guardian angel there is God, who through the guardian angel (but can also directly) guides the mind of an adult.

Transfer in the renaissance and new time of the function of reflection from the divine mind to the individual

There are two important figures here, Nicholas of Cusa and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Kuzanets transfers the function of reason to man, understanding the latter as a “second god”; as a result, the human mind is endowed with the ability not only to think, but also to control thinking. “So”, says Kuzanets through the mouth of his hero the Simpleton, “names are given thanks to the movement of the mind. Namely, the understanding moves around things that fall under sensation, and distinguishes, harmonizes and separates them, so that there is nothing in the understanding that was not previously in sensation... Just as the visual ability of the soul cannot be realized, that is, really to see unless it is excited by an object - and it cannot be excited by it unless it is confronted by sensory images multiplied in the sense organ, and thus it needs the eye - so is the faculty of the mind - and this is the faculty of perception and understanding of things, - cannot achieve fulfillment unless it is excited by the sensory, and cannot become excited without intermediary sensory representations... However, since the soul cannot succeed if it is completely devoid of the power of judgment, - just as a deaf person never cannot become a kifared, since he does not have any idea of \u200b\u200bharmony, with the help of which he could judge his successes - our mind has an innate ability of judgment, without which it could not function successfully. This power of judgment is naturally innate in the mind. With its help, he himself judges reasonableness grounds” [7, p. 392, 399] (emphasis added - V.R.).

“The mind is a living substance, which, as we know from experience, speaks internally in us and judges, and which, more than any other ability of all the spiritual abilities we feel in ourselves, is likened to infinite substance and absolute form. Her duty in our body is to give life to the body; that is why it is called soul. Hence, the mind is a substantial form, or force, which concentrates in itself everything in a corresponding manner: the animating force, with the help of which the mind animates the body, endowing it with plant life and the ability to sense; and rational power, as well as rational and intelligible power” [Ibid., p. 388-389, 400-401].

	Mind (soul?)
Individual →	Control ↓ ↓ apperception ↑
“Second god” (person?)	Foundations of the mind of a thing (phenomenon)

Table 2

Renaissance man becomes accustomed to a double world: he begins to study nature and at the same time continues to pay tribute to God. Having borrowed will and faith in reason from the latter, he becomes more independent of the Creator, since he has become a Christian and ceases to fear the End of the World and the Last Judgment. Increasingly, people of the Renaissance perceive God as a universal cause, as laws to which both life and nature are subject. A person begins to interpret himself only as less perfect in relation to the Creator. However, if God has retired, having become embodied in nature and its laws, who now directs man, how he thinks? Kuzanets outlines the answer to this question by transferring the function of controlling thinking (which was previously carried out by God through reason) from God to man. At the same time, he resolves the question of the nature of cognition, outlining a scheme of apperception (not just a sensation, but a meaningful one that determines thought). A division of the functions of thinking is already emerging: the mind not only thinks, but is also aware of its thinking (“it itself judges the reasonableness of its foundations”).

In modern times, Leibniz picks up the ideas of Cusanus, rethinking and correcting them regarding personality. Firstly, he believes that different individuals think and perceive everything differently, and secondly, that in each individual person’s ideas about himself and the world change depending on personal attitudes. How to understand the difference between sensory perceptions of things and apperceptions, including awareness of the grounds, as well as the difference in ideas between one person and many? Leibniz solves these problems by introducing the idea of “monads”, i.e. mediators between God and personality. “According to Leibniz’s idea of the monad, consciousness is the likeness and image of God, and therefore, thinking about itself, it thinks about God himself, cognizing the limited in itself, it thinks the same as the unlimited in God; thinking about ourselves, we think about being. Monad is “...a living mirror, endowed with internal action, reproducing the universe from its own point of view and ordered in the same way as the universe itself” [8, p. 405; 11].

The concept of reflection 1.0

Locke, attributing fixed characteristics to reflection, creates the first concept of reflection. A concept, unlike a scheme, is built within the framework of thinking (philosophical or scientific) and involves following logic (rules and categories). Reflection, from Locke’s point of view, belongs to the individual, making it possible to explain the sources and work of his cognition and thinking. At the same time, the reduction of forms of thinking to activity begins. “By reflection”, writes Locke, “I mean that observation to which the mind subjects its activity and the methods of its manifestation, as a result of which ideas of this activity arise in the mind” [9, p. 155]. “Calling the first source (of experience) sensation”, writes Locke, “I call the second “reflection”, because it supplies only such ideas as are acquired by the soul by means of reflection on its own internal activities” [10, p. 129].

	Mind (soul) ← (ideas)
Individual →	↓ Reflection ↑
(Personality)	Inner life (activity)

Table 3

In modern philosophy, the concept of reflection was intended to explain the integrity and development of man as an individual. On the one hand, the personality constantly acquires new knowledge, ideas, concepts, abilities, on the other hand, all these new formations are firmly locked in the circle of "I", belong to the universe of the personality and, therefore, must stem from what already exists in the "I", that is, from old. The resolution of this contradiction occurs within the framework of reflexive discourse (but in this case the conscious concept of reflection is already introduced). The universe of the individual is assigned a special ability - reflection, which combines both an artificial plane (reflection of the activity of the soul, knowledge of it) and a natural one (reflection itself is a part of the soul, a mechanism for its change). Of course, personality changes not so much on its own as under the influence of the external environment (relationships with "others", activities, attempts to resolve various problems) and therefore is by no means a universe. However, from the point of view of the personalistic conceptualization of man, personality is precisely the universe, and as long as such a point of view takes place, the concept of reflection will also work.

The concept of reflection 2.0. Reflection as an ideal object of speculative philosophy

Leibniz is actually a point of bifurcation, from which there is a fork. Some thinkers (Locke and his followers) attributed reflection to the individual (personality), others, starting with Kant, came to the conclusion that the source of development and thinking is the "de-individual principle" (Mind, Spirit, Consciousness, Activity, etc.), respectively, reflection refers to this beginning. What about the individual and personality? The latter began to be interpreted as "subjective conditions" for the action of the deindividual principle.

Indeed, on the one hand, in the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant writes that the individual himself "a priori, in accordance with concepts, mentally put into things and showed (by construction). He realized that he can have correct a priori knowledge about something only if he attributes to a thing only that which necessarily follows from what he himself has put into it in accordance with his concept". On the other hand, "a priori, in accordance with concepts" is given by Reason, which is understood by Kant as a special nature, subject to "eternal and unchanging laws" [6, p. 84-85]. Reflection as a mechanism of thinking is transferred by Kant to Reason, although the scheme of reflection is borrowed from the individual.

"The Latin word reflexio", we read in editor's comments to the translation of Hegel's "Science of Logic", means "bending back", "deflecting back", "reflection" (of light, a sound wave, an object thrown at something). In European languages, this word, along with the meaning of reflection, also acquired the meaning of reflection, deliberation, reasoning, consideration (thought, as it were, turns on itself, is reflected; into itself, directed towards itself)" [3]. And here is Kant's own explanation.

"Reflection (reflexio) does not deal with the objects themselves in order to obtain concepts directly from them, but there is a state of mind that first of all prompts us to discover the subjective conditions under which we can get to concepts" [6, c. 314]. In the preface to the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant notes that "this rather profound investigation has, however, two sides". One relates to the objects of pure understanding and must show and explain the objective significance of its a priori concepts; that is why it is included in my plans. The other is designed to consider pure understanding itself in relation to its possibility and the cognitive powers on which it is based, therefore to consider it in a subjective respect, and although this consideration, taking into account my main goal, is of great importance, it is still not included in it essentially, for the main question remains: what and to what extent can reason and reason cognize independently of any experience, but not how the ability to think itself is possible? [6, p. 78] (our italics - V.R.).

It's the same with Hegel, reflection is a mechanism for the development of the spirit, but its scheme is clearly borrowed from the reflection of the individual. "Reflection is, first of all, a movement of thought that goes beyond the boundaries of isolated certainty and brings it into relation and connection with other certainties so that, although the certainties are posited in some connection, they retain their former isolated significance" [3, p. 206].

Reflections 3.0. Reflection as an ideal object of activity theory (based on the works of G.P. Shchedrovitsky)

In this direction, which received a double name (“Moscow Methodological Circle” and “Shchedrovitsky’s methodology”), activity is also considered as a deindividual principle, and reflection as a mechanism for the development of activity. But unlike representatives of German classical philosophy, Shchedrovitsky not only interprets reflection as a mechanism of development, but builds a discourse designed to show how reflection is connected with activity; at the same time, he actually argues that the interpretation of reflection as belonging to the individual is a converted form of the deindividual approach. In my opinion, as in German classical philosophy, such reflection cannot be presented as an adequate description of specific types of reflection in different practices, but can be effectively used for activity-theoretic interpretation.

At the same time, Shchedrovitsky solved a key problem for “panmethodology” (the author’s term): he offered an explanation of why methodology is one of the main sources of development of activity. His reasoning was approximately as follows: the specificity of methodological work lies precisely in reflection; awareness and restructuring of activity presupposes reflection, that is, the individual’s exit from the position of an actor into a special position of development (from which activity can be studied and restructured); however, the development of activity occurs only if the “reflective output” ensures the cooperation of both activities (reflected and reflective).

	Reflective position individual	
Reflexive output		Reflexive input
↑Display		↓ Design
Previous activities	Cooperation former and bud. activities	Future activities

Table 4

Reflection as a mechanism for the development (cooperation) of activity

“Reflection”, writes G. Shchedrovitsky, “is one of the most interesting, complex and to some extent even mystical process in activity; At the same time, it is the most important moment in the mechanisms of development of activities...”

It is natural (and this should have followed from everything stated above) that reflection interests us primarily from the point of view of the method of developing activity patterns, i.e. formal rules governing the design, or, with another interpretation, the depiction of the mechanisms and patterns of the natural development of activity... the constructive principle is the connections of cooperation... a scheme of such a cooperative connection must be created that could be considered as specific to reflection.

In this role we have the so-called “reflexive exit” scheme. It was obtained in connection with other problems, but was then used to introduce and explain reflection as such...

Let’s imagine that some individual carries out an activity specified by his goals (or task), means and knowledge, and suppose that for one reason or another he fails...

No matter how new and different from all previous ones the projected activity may be, the project itself or its plan can only be developed on the basis of analysis and awareness of previously completed activities and the products obtained from them...

It is important for us to emphasize that in all cases, in order to obtain such a description of activities already carried out, the individual we are considering, if we take him as an isolated and individual, must leave his previous position as an agent and move to a new position, external as in relation to previous, already completed activities, and in relation to future, projected activities. This will be what we call a reflexive output... The given diagram of a reflexive output will serve as the first abstract model characteristic of reflection as a whole.

Considering the relationship between previous activities (or newly projected activities) and the activities of the individual in a reflexive position, we can notice that the latter, as it were, absorbs the former (including that which has yet to be produced); For her, previous activities act as material for analysis, and future activities act as a projected object. This relation of absorption through knowledge acts as a second, although (as we will see later) non-specific characteristic of reflection in general.

The relation of reflexive absorption, acting as a static equivalent of reflexive output, allows us to abandon the principle of the “isolated universal individual” and consider the reflexive relation directly as a type of cooperation between different individuals and, accordingly, as a type of cooperation between different durations. Now the essence of a reflexive relationship is no longer that this or that individual goes “out of himself” and “for himself”, but that activity develops, creating increasingly complex cooperative structures based on the principle of reflexive absorption. At the same time, we get the opportunity to even consider the actual reflexive output of a separate isolated individual in a uniform way as the formation of reflexive cooperation between two “active positions” or “places”.

But in order for two activities - reflected and reflective - to act in cooperation with each other as equal and lying, as it were, side by side, it is necessary that certain cooperative connections of activity be established between them and be appropriate organization of the material has been developed. It can be actually “practical” or engineering-methodological production connections of transferring the products of one activity as raw material or means to another activity; these can be actually theoretical, ideal connections of unification and integration of means of activity, objects, knowledge, etc. when servicing any third activity. One or the other, but there must be some actual cooperative ties” [21, p. 271-276].

We are talking, as we see, about activity in general. Currently, doubts and questions arise regarding this approach (any activity in general). Or maybe understanding the development of specific types of activity requires different ideas of reflection? And if not activity, but “mental activity” or not activity at all. Arguments that we are, supposedly, in the theory of activity, or that everything can be represented as activity (one can, of course, imagine it, but what will remain of the phenomenon that interests us?) are understandable, but do not solve the problems.

Please note that the development of activities involves the design of new activities. But the methodological work is also specified by Shchedrovitsky in one of his plans through design. “The products and results of methodological work for the most part are not knowledge tested for truth, but projects, design schemes and instructions. And this is an inevitable conclusion, as soon as we abandon the too narrow, purely cognitive attitude and accept K. Marx’s thesis about the revolutionary-critical, transformative nature of human activity” [23, p. 96].

The second point is that understanding development presupposes not only the creation of the new, but also the connection of the new with the old, which can be understood in the logic of complication or transformation of the developing whole. Through what means, what means is development taking place? Design and reflection. But how can an individual get out of his position as a doer, see activity in a new way and rebuild it? What can he rely on for this? If you look at the actual work of G. Shchedrovitsky and his colleagues, a natural answer suggests itself - to schemes and work with them (deployment of schemes, their discussion, creation of others based on some schemes). How can we correct the schemes so that they express the reality needed by the actor, that is, come closer to the models? We want, writes Shchedrovitsky, that the diagrams “correspond to the subject being studied” [21, p. 245]. For this, Shchedrovitsky says, not only design is necessary, but also further research. However, if it is very complex, and the task is “to build a mechanism and rules for the deployment of schemes”, then in this case it is possible to replace the research with construction in the ontology of activity, relying specifically on activity schemes [21, p. 273].

Is it then impossible to assume that reflection in Shchedrovitsky’s interpretation makes it possible to explain the development of activity precisely through the activity of the methodologist, who builds schemes and designs new activities and again schemes on their basis? “There is a complete rejection of the description of the external object. Reflection comes to the fore, and the meaning of the idea is

to actively create a new mental-active world and record it in time - and this is in order to create again and reflect again, and to create again more accurately. Therefore, in fact, there is not a study of an external object, but a continuous analysis and awareness of the experience of one's work" [22, p. 124].

But it would be strange to think that only methodologists of the Moscow Methodological Circle (abbreviation MMK) correctly develop thinking; Often, like other "disciplinaries", they create problems and contradictions that hinder development.

The undoubted merit of the Moscow Methodological Circle (abbreviation MMK) is the invention of graphic reflection schemes.

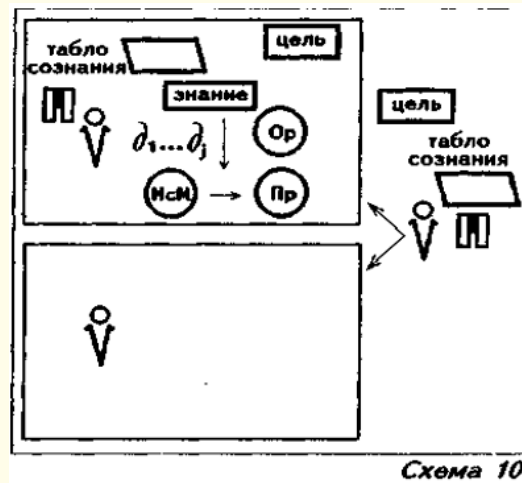


Figure 2: Scheme of G. Shchedrovitsky.

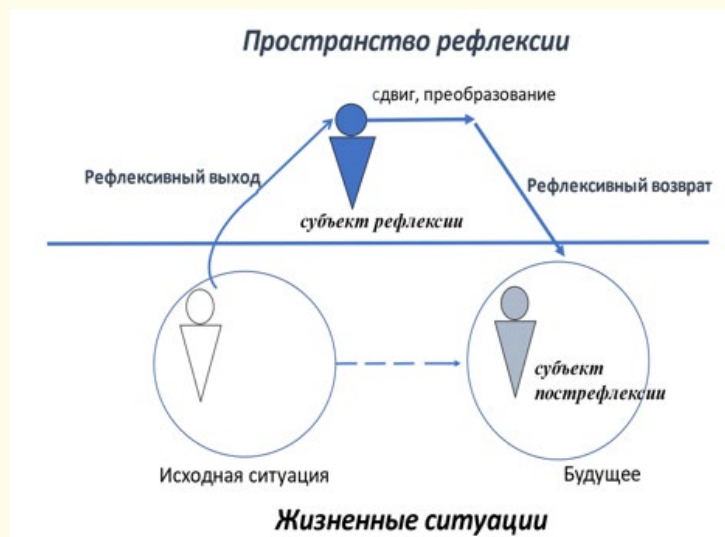


Figure 3: Scheme by L. Karnozova.

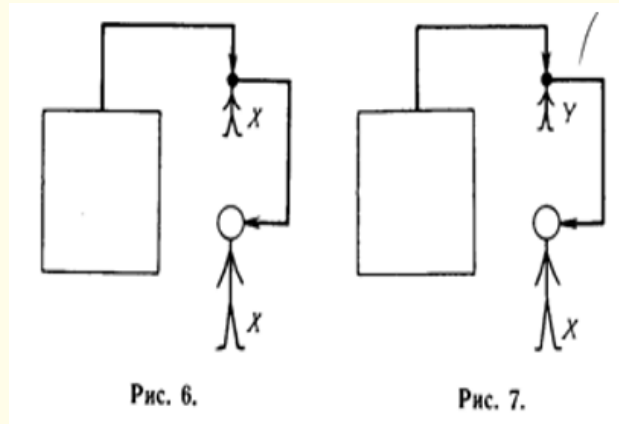


Figure 4: Scheme of reflection by V. Lefebvre.

In my opinion, adequate work with such schemes (we have given three typical examples) involves the reconstruction of the problematic situations that forced their authors to invent these schemes, as well as the opportunities that such schemes create (for example, the opening up of a new understanding of development or new action).

Criticism of the activity-theoretic concepts of reflection, intention to construct a new concept

This criticism comes in three directions. Firstly, the space into which the reflector enters begins to be problematized; it is increasingly understood in the logic of a turn that leads beyond the boundaries of the previous whole and activity in general. Secondly, the unsatisfactoriness of reducing any contents and objects to activity is recorded. Thirdly, the requirement for comprehension and control of reflection itself is formulated.

“Reflection”, writes A.P. Ogurtsov, - leads to a shift in patterns, to a change in patterns of activity and thought. The process of reflection can be captured and reconstructed by comparing the initial patterns of activity and those patterns that arise after the act of reflection” [12, p. 45] “What kind”, asks M.A. Rozov, - should there be a description of reflective systems? It seems to us”, he answers, “that the researcher should take a special supra-reflexive position, the essence of which is that reflection itself and its functions become the object of study. This means that we must describe some activity before its reflexive awareness, we must then describe this latter, we must finally show how reflection leads to a restructuring of the original activity” [16, p. 95-96].

Should we not, in connection with this criticism, distinguish between two types of reflection? In the first, reflection is considered as a mechanism for the development of a certain whole - a person, consciousness, activity, etc. The development of this whole is explained precisely through reflection as the main mechanism, for example, the development of a person through self-awareness. Reflection here does not define the whole; on the contrary, its possibilities are determined by the developing whole. For example, the development of personality is determined only by the work of self-awareness. Doubting such discourse, Goethe writes:

Know yourself! - I would ask for clarification.

Excuse me: one must be and at the same time not be!

How to know yourself?

Just not by observing yourself,

and by dedicating yourself to the task...

Man can never look at himself

as an object of knowledge [4].

The second concept of reflection (let's call it "supra-individual") interprets reflection in the second phase in the form of a fundamental shift, an exit into another whole (space, situation), where the opportunity opens up to see and act differently in relation to oneself. In this case, reflection cannot be understood as a development mechanism built into the whole. Reflection in terms of development defines a space, a broader whole, as opposed to a whole that is developing. For example, a personality develops through reflection, which is only partially determined by this personality; the intersubjective situation, including communication with others and the pressure of various circumstances, plays no less important.

A reflective personality, as it were, transfers himself to a new reality, or rather, actually moves into another space of being (life), where he himself is different and can do different things, including renewing ("changing") his subjectivity. Here a doubt may arise: do we not stop dealing with reflection if we move to another reality and space? It all depends on how we make the transition: losing connection with ourselves (with our own subjectivity) or maintaining it. In the first case, indeed, reflection disappears, in the second it does not, since the subject, making a reflexive exit, remembers his start and since he attributes the new knowledge or idea that he acquired as a result of reflection to himself. In this regard, doesn't it make sense to distinguish two planes (tops) in reflection: entering a position of non-findability, shift and transformation (one top) and the act of holding subjectivity, knowing the start and attributing the reflexive content to oneself (the second top)?

"The metaphysics of subjectivity", writes Ogurtsov, who considered reflection as thinking about thinking, "is contrasted in modern philosophy with the ontological interpretation of acts of understanding, inseparable from the reality with which they are associated and which they express. Thinking is interpreted as thinking-in-the-flow of life, and distancing, which is associated with an emphasis on the reflexive interpretation of thinking, is seen as limited and requiring deconstruction" [13, p. 446].

Another methodology for constructing the concept of reflection suggests itself. Firstly, a movement from the analysis of specific types of reflection and the formulation of counter hypotheses about the structure of reflection, and the latter should not lead to reduction. These are hypotheses that are tested, clarified and, if necessary, discarded in the field of different cases (schemes) of specific types of reflection. Secondly, along with activity, there are other realities - personality, actions, deeds, different types of thoughts, experiences, creative processes, etc. A ban on reducing these different "individuals" (not subjects, but unique formations) to any one reality (activity, mental activity, mind, spirit, intuition, rhizome, etc.).

Questioning as one of the forms of "moral reflection"

In "Confession", Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy reflects on his life and asks himself questions. Such questions are usually asked by a person who has lost his taste for life, is mired in everyday life, and does not understand why he lives.

"That's how I lived, but five years ago something very strange began to happen to me: moments of bewilderment, a stop in life, began to come over me, as if I didn't know how to live, what to do, and I became lost and fell into despondency. But it passed, and I continued to live as before. Then these moments of bewilderment began to repeat more and more often and all in the same form. These stops in life were always expressed by the same questions: Why?

Well, what then?

At first it seemed to me that this was so - aimless, inappropriate questions. It seemed to me that all this was known and that if I ever wanted to solve them, it would not cost me any work - that now only I had no time to do this, and when I wanted to, then I would find the answers. But questions began to be repeated more and more often, answers were required more and more urgently, and like dots, falling all in one place, these unanswered questions rallied into one black spot. <...>

I realized that this was not a random ailment, but something very important, and that if the same questions were repeated, then they needed to be answered. And I tried to answer. The questions seemed so stupid, simple, childish questions. But as soon as I touched them and tried to resolve them, I was immediately convinced, firstly, that these were not childish and stupid questions, but the most important and profound questions in life, and, secondly, that I cannot and cannot, no matter how much I think, resolve them. Before I start working on my Samara estate, raising my son, or writing a book, I need to know why I'm going to do this. While I don't know why, I can't do anything. Among my thoughts about the farm, which occupied me very much at that time, the question suddenly occurred to me: "Well, okay, you will have 6,000 dessiatines in the Samara province, 300 heads of horses, and then?" And I was completely taken aback and didn't know what to think next. Or, as I began to think about how I would raise my children, I would say to myself, "Why?" Or, discussing how the people can achieve prosperity, I suddenly said to myself: "What does it matter to me?" Or, thinking about the fame that my writings would gain for me, I said to myself: "Well, okay, you will be more famous than Gogol, Pushkin, Shakespeare, Moliere, all of them". writers in the world - well, so what!". And I couldn't answer anything. <...>

"Family"... - I said to myself; - but family - wife, children; they are people too. They are in the same conditions as I am: they either have to live a lie or see the terrible truth. Why should they live? Why should I love them, take care of them, raise them and take care of them? <...>

"But maybe I looked through something and didn't understand something? - I told myself several times. "It cannot be that this state of despair is characteristic of people". And I looked for explanations to my questions in all the knowledge that people acquired. And I searched painfully and for a long time, and not out of idle curiosity, I did not search sluggishly, but I searched painfully, persistently, days and nights, - I searched, like a perishing man is looking for salvation, - and I found nothing...

For a long time I was timid in the face of knowledge, and it seemed to me that the inconsistency of the answers to my questions was not due to the fault of knowledge, but from my ignorance; but the matter was not a joke for me, not amusement, but the matter of my whole life, and I, willy-nilly, was led to the conviction that my questions were the only legitimate questions that served as the basis of all knowledge, and that it was not I and my questions who were to blame, but science, if it has the pretension to answer these questions.

My question - the one that led me to suicide at the age of fifty, was the simplest question that lies in the soul of every person, from a stupid child to the wisest old man - that question without which life is impossible, as I experienced in practice. The question is: "What will come of what I do today, what will I do tomorrow, what will come of my whole life?"

Expressed differently, the question would be: "Why should I live, why should I desire anything, why should I do anything?" Another way to express the question is: "Is there such a meaning in my life that would not be destroyed by the inevitable death that awaits me?" [19].

¹ Compare Pushkin, who was experiencing a crisis at the very end of the 20s

A vain gift, a random gift,
Life, why were you given to me?
Or why fate is a secret
Are you sentenced to death?..
There is no goal in front of me:
The heart is empty, the mind is idle
And it makes me sad
The monotonous noise of life
(1928 On Pushkin's birthday)

Tolstoy does not find answers to all these questions in science and philosophy, but finds them in faith, albeit in a unique, personally understood way. "Well, I know", I told myself, "everything that science so persistently wants to know, but there is no answer to the question about the meaning of my life on this path. In the speculative area, I understood that, despite the fact, or precisely because the goal of knowledge was directly aimed at answering my question, there was no answer other than the one I gave myself: What is the meaning of my life? - None. - Or: What will come of my life? - Nothing. - Or: Why does everything that exists exist, and why do I exist? - Then what exists. <...>

Having understood this, I realized that it was impossible to look for an answer to my question in rational knowledge and that the answer given by rational knowledge is only an indication that the answer can only be obtained by posing the question differently, only when the reasoning includes the question of the relationship between the finite and the infinite is introduced. I also understood that, no matter how unreasonable and ugly the answers given by faith may be, they have the advantage that they introduce into each answer the relation of the finite to the infinite, without which there can be no answer. No matter how I pose the question: how should I live? - answer: according to God's law. - What will really come out of my life? - Eternal torment or eternal bliss. -What is the meaning that is not destroyed by death? - Union with the infinite God, heaven.

So, in addition to rational knowledge, which previously seemed to me the only one, I was inevitably led to the recognition that all living humanity also has some other knowledge, unreasonable - faith, which makes it possible to live. All the unreasonableness of faith remained the same for me as before, but I could not help but recognize that it alone gives humanity answers to the questions of life and, as a result, the opportunity to live" [19].

Aren't Tolstoy's questions mere speculation, abstract philosophizing? Or ordinary melancholy, resulting in the famous Russian melancholy? I think no. There are at least three existential problems that led educated nobles of the 19th century to ask such questions. Firstly, this is the fear of death, however, common to all people of the Western world. Secondly, dissatisfaction with Russian life in comparison with Western life. Thirdly, the contradictions that arise between, in essence, again Western, liberal ideals (freedom, equality, respect for the personality of others) and the real life of the Russian landowner. Let us briefly consider the last two problems, as conditioning Tolstoy's questions (they also set the scope of questioning).

Dissatisfaction with Russian life in comparison with Western life. The very end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries is marked in Russia by the formation of a personality oriented towards Europe and at the same time beginning to think about Russia. The individual is characterized by independent behavior, a certain opposition to society, thinking through his own life, and an attitude towards building it [14, p. 232]. A necessary condition for personal existence is building the world and yourself in this world. If we talk specifically about the emerging Russian personality of this time, we can note the following features:

- As a rule, these were educated people who began to think about Russia and felt responsible for the lives of peasants and the poor.
- Almost all of them were believers, and not formally.
- These were people who knew Europe and compared Russia with it.
- They assessed the state of Russia as unsatisfactory, requiring changes, and at the same time believed in the originality of Russia, its peculiar incommensurability with Europe.
- Thinking about the life and situation of the peasants and the poor (what Dostoevsky calls "the people"), educated, thinking people, as a rule, came to the conclusion that the current situation was abnormal.
- To one degree or another, they thought through the indicated realities - faith, Europe, Russia, people - and looked for a way out.
- The way out was seen (in fact, built by the individual) in a movement involving the moral work of the individual, society and state, in the direction of building a world, the core of which was faith and Orthodoxy.

Karamzin and Chaadaev played a particularly large role in the formation of these ideas. If Karamzin contributed with his works and especially "History of the Russian State" to highlighting Russia as an independent subject of thought and responsibility, as well as contrasting it with Europe and exalting it, then Chaadaev indicated the desired way out, constituting the tradition itself. At the same time, Chaadaev's reasoning about world history went through two stages. At the first, he comes to the idea that it was in Europe that the ideas and plans of Christianity were embodied, and Russia remained on the sidelines, dropped out of the world historical process. But such a conclusion about Russia did not fit into my head and contradicted the very idea of the providence of the Creator. Therefore, at the second stage, Chaadaev comes up with ideas that form the essence of the tradition under consideration.

This is the quintessence of this tradition. Russia has its own purpose, it will come into play later, Russia will determine the historical development of Europe and the whole world, the main content of this future stage of history will be the revelation in the form of social life of the ideas of true Christianity and Orthodoxy [15, p. 45-47].

Contradictions between liberal ideals and the real life of a Russian landowner. These contradictions were diverse; they permeated the entire life of a Russian in the 19th century. I will illustrate them using the example of the relationship of a rich nobleman to a poor girl at the very end of the 19th century (a story described by Tolstoy in his novel "Sunday").

Let me remind you of the plot of "Sunday". The main character of the novel, Prince Dmitry Ivanovich Nekhlyudov, while still a student, visits his aunts and seduces their 16-year-old half-maid, half-schoolgirl Katyusha Maslova. Having given her a hundred-ruble note on the last day, he leaves. Katyusha finds out that she is pregnant, leaves her young ladies-owners, and then her fate develops very sadly. The child dies and after a series of life's ups and downs, Maslova ends up in a brothel. Seven years later, she is tried on suspicion of poisoning the merchant Smelkov, who spent the entire day before and the last night before his death with Maslova in a brothel. Nekhlyudov is horrified to recognize the suspect as the girl he seduced. Although Maslova was innocent, a miscarriage of justice leads to her being sentenced to hard labor. During the trial and after it, there is a struggle in Nekhlyudov's soul, which ends with the prince's decision to change his life and atone for his guilt before Katyusha, which Nekhlyudov does. At the same time, a real spiritual rebirth occurs with him.

"(At the trial, where Nekhlyudov recognizes Katyusha. - V.R.). "It can't be", Nekhlyudov continued to say, and yet he already knew without any doubt that it was she, the same girl, the maid-in-training, with whom he was at one time in love, precisely in love, and then in some way... then he seduced and abandoned a crazy child and then never remembered about her, because the memory was too painful, too clearly exposed him and showed that he, so proud of his decency, not only acted dishonestly, but downright vilely with this woman" [20].

(During the period of seduction of Katyusha). "In Nekhlyudov, like in all people, there were two people. One is a spiritual man, seeking only good for himself that would be good for other people, and the other is an animal man, seeking good only for himself and for this good is ready to sacrifice the good of the whole world. During this period of his madness of egoism, caused in him by St. Petersburg and military life, this animal man ruled in him and completely crushed the spiritual man... That animal man who lived in him not only now raised his head, but also trampled under his feet that spiritual the man he was on his first visit and even this morning in church, and this terrible animal man now ruled alone in his soul... He stood looking at Katyusha's pensive face, tormented by internal work, and he felt sorry for her, but, strange matter, this pity only intensified the lust for her. Lust possessed them all" [20]. It cannot be said that he did not try to fight his temptation; Nekhlyudov understood perfectly well that he was doing wrong.

"In Nekhlyudov's soul on this last day spent with his aunts, when the memory of the night was fresh, two feelings rose and fought with each other: one - the burning, sensual memories of animal love, although it was far from delivering what it promised, and some self-satisfaction achieved goals; the other is the consciousness that he has done something bad and that this bad thing needs to be corrected, and corrected not for her, but for himself.

In the state of madness of egoism in which he was, Nekhlyudov thought only about himself - about whether he would be condemned and to what extent if they found out about what he had done to her, and not about what she was experiencing and what would happen to her... He gave her this money - as much as he considered decent for his position and her position...

“No, take it”, he muttered and put the envelope in her bosom, and, as if he had been burned, he, wincing and groaning, ran to his room...

“But what to do? It’s always like this... And if everyone does it, then that’s how it should be”. So, he consoled himself, but he could not console himself. This memory burned his conscience...

In the depths, in the very depths of his soul, he knew that he had acted so badly, vilely, cruelly that, with the consciousness of this act, he could not only condemn someone himself, but look people in the eyes, not to mention consider himself as the wonderful, noble, generous young man he believed himself to be. And he needed to consider himself this way in order to continue to live cheerfully and cheerfully. And there was only one way to do this: don’t think about it. So, he did” [20].

In other words, the direction of the evolution of Nekhlyudov’s personality in that period was determined by the desire to continue to live “cheerfully and cheerfully, without thinking about his unseemly deeds”. Apparently, the existential problems discussed here directly concerned Tolstoy. These are some of the characteristics of the sphere of questioning in which Tolstoy found himself. Unable to resolve these problems, but also unable to push them away from himself, which creates a situation of questioning, Tolstoy, after fifty years, experiences difficult mental states and begins to ask himself questions to which he cannot find answers. But he searches persistently.

In this regard, “Resurrection” can be looked at in two ways: on the one hand, a brilliant work of art, on the other, the artistic and moral reflection of the writer himself. From the point of view of the proposed opposition, the nature of reflection experienced by Nekhlyudov is also interesting: it is built in as a functioning mechanism in the hero’s personality - “not to think”, “everyone does this”, not to change anything in his life. In this case, it turns out that reflection is not a mechanism for the development of personality, but for its reproduction.

(Repentance and spiritual revolution). “How to make amends for your sin before Katyusha? We can’t leave it like that. “You can’t leave the woman I loved and be satisfied with paying the lawyer money and freeing her from hard labor, which she doesn’t deserve, making amends with money, as I then thought I did what I should by giving her money”.

And he vividly remembered the moment when he, having caught up with her in the corridor, handed her money and ran away from her... - Only a scoundrel, a scoundrel could do that! And I, I am that scoundrel and that scoundrel! - he spoke out loud. “Am I really, really”, he stopped mid-walk, “am I really, am I really a scoundrel?” And then who? - he answered himself...

“I will break this lie that binds me, no matter what it costs me, and I will admit everything and tell everyone the truth and do the truth”, he decisively said out loud to himself...

He prayed, asked God to help him, to move into him and cleanse him, and yet what he asked for had already happened. The God who lived in him awoke in his consciousness. He felt like one and therefore felt not only freedom, vigor and joy of life, but felt all the power of good. Everything, all the best that a person could do, he now felt capable of doing” [20].

Of course, faced with the difficulties and problems of his new life, Nekhlyudov more than once wanted to return back to the old comfortable harbor, and more than once his animal man raised his head and voice, but, having gathered strength and calling on God for help, who immediately responded, the hero “Resurrection” found the strength to follow a new path of spiritual rebirth. In this case, the trial served as a situation that expanded his consciousness, showing Nekhlyudov his true appearance, no longer allowing him to hide behind soothing and familiar explanations. And help came to him from his conscience, which had not yet completely fallen asleep, and from God. By the way, Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy understood God, as is known, not canonically.

(After attending a prison church service). “And it never occurred to anyone present, from the priest and the caretaker to Maslova, that that same Jesus, whose name the priest repeated with a whistle so countless times, praising him with all sorts of strange words, forbade precisely everything that was done here; prohibited not only such senseless verbosity and the blasphemous sorcery of priest-teachers over bread and wine, but in the most specific way forbade some people to call other people teachers; he forbade prayers in churches, and ordered everyone to pray in solitude, he forbade these very temples, saying that he had come to destroy them and that one should pray not in churches, but in the soul and truth; most importantly, he forbade not only judging people and keeping them in captivity, torturing, disgracing, executing them, as was done here, but also forbade all violence against people, saying that he had come to release the prisoners to freedom” [20].

A person who has embarked on the path of rebirth to a new life turns for help to his conscience, or to God, or to reason, or to all of this at once, but the understanding of both is different at different times. We have to re-establish ourselves, as Tolstoy and his followers do, and before, for example, Emanuel Swedenborg did, and then Pavel Florensky, both in what God is and in what it means to live according to conscience and justice.

At the same time, of course, I am far from the idea of identifying these remarkable personalities with Nekhlyudov. Unfortunately, not many people are capable of spiritual rebirth. But no one knows whether the most inveterate criminal, the very last man, has finally lost his immortal soul (if it is immortal, then it cannot die), and also no one can guarantee that this lost person will not find himself in a situation where his soul will wake up, and cleansing and revitalizing forces will come to her aid.

Here reflection has a completely different character. Firstly, it really contributes to the development of Nekhlyudov’s personality. Secondly, this is the second type of reflection: the changed Nekhlyudov enters another space of reflection, where he is already different - having felt God, led by conscience. In this case, reflection helps the personality (Nekhlyudov, Tolstoy) to make a spiritual revolution, to be born, as Søren Kierkegaard wrote, “a second birth”, which in theoretical terms can be understood as follows - not development, but the formation of a new personality.

To sum up, we must assert that the questions that Tolstoy asks in “Confession” are determined by our great writer’s attitudes towards resolving the problems facing him, towards the resumption of a paralyzed life, even towards transformation, without which such a resumption cannot take place. Within the framework of the Russian tradition of religious salvation, he sees and finds a solution along the paths of faith, but not proclaimed by the official church, but faith, meaningful and built independently.

It may seem that the introduction of the idea of moral reflection is the author’s humanitarian delights. I cannot agree with this, given that we have entered and are living in an era of a deep crisis of personality and morality, which is destroying the life of both the individual and society.

Conclusion

Thus, we tried to show that although the concept of reflection emerged only in modern times, the schemes and discourse of reflection were created much earlier, starting in antiquity. These three intellectual constructs (reflection as schema, discourse and concept) were used to explain the development of the individual or the deindividual whole (Mind, Spirit, Activity). At the same time, reflection was understood as a mechanism that explains development by going beyond the boundaries of the whole or the individual into a space from which they could be comprehended, and then returning, allowing both to be changed. Currently, the concept of reflection needs to be rethought in connection with the crisis of basic individual and social phenomena, as well as ideas about their development.

Bibliography

1. Aristotle. "Metaphysics". M. Leningrad, Sotsekgiz (1934): 348.
2. Vygotsky LS. "Dynamics and structure of a teenager's personality". In the book: Reader on developmental and educational psychology. M (1982): 138-142.
3. Hegel GWF. Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences. Op. M. T. 1. Science of Logic (1974): 540.
4. Goethe's Sayings.
5. Zakharchenko MV. "Reflection in pedagogy".
6. Kant I. "Critique of Pure Reason". Works in six volumes. T. 3. M., "Thought" (1964): 799.
7. Kuzansky N. "Collection". Op. in 2 volumes. T. 2. M (1980): 471.
8. Leibniz GW. "Principles of nature and grace based on reason". Works in four volumes: T. 1. M (1982): 404-413.
9. Locke J. "Essays". M: Mysl, T. 1 (1985): 621.
10. Locke D. "Experience about the human mind". Selected. philosopher. prod. M., T. 1 (1960): 734.
11. New time: the concept of reflection.
12. Ogurtsov AP. "Alternative models of consciousness analysis: reflection and understanding". Thoughts about thoughts. Novosibirsk (1995): 13-27.
13. Ogurtsov AP. "Reflection". New philosophical encyclopedia in 4 volumes. T. 3. M (2001).
14. Rozin VM. "Personality and its study". M., (2006, 2012): 229.
15. Rozin VM. "Understanding F.M. Dostoevsky in "The Writer's Diaries" of the mission of Russia and its relationship to Europe". *Culture and Art* 9 (2017): 70-76.
16. Rozov MA. "Towards a methodology for analyzing reflective systems". Thoughts about thoughts. Novosibirsk (1995): 32-43.
17. Rubinshtein SL. "Being and consciousness". M (1957): 328.
18. Semenov IN and Stepanov S Yu. "Reflection in the organization of creative thinking and personal self-development". *Questions of Psychology* 2 (1983): 35-42.
19. Tolstoy LN. "Confession".
20. Tolstoy LN. "Sunday". Collection Op. T. 11. M (1948): 682.
21. Shchedrovitsky GP. "Initial ideas of activity theory". Selected works. M: Shk. Cult. Polit., (1995): 233-281.

22. Shchedrovitsky GP. "Methodological organization of the field of psychology". *Questions of Methodology* 1-2 (1997): 108-127.
23. Shchedrovitsky GP. "Principles and scheme of organization of system-structural research". Selected works. M.: Shk. Cult. Polit. (1995): 88-115.

Volume 12 Issue 11 December 2023

©All rights reserved by Rozin Vadim Markovich.