

Culture as Self-Perception

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An attempt is made to operationalize the content of the “culture” concept in cultural-historical psychology. It is demonstrated that within its framework the culture appears to be a “social environment”, a system of social standards, rather than mediator of human freedom, as a way of self-perception of a man, which helps to reveal creative potential. According to the author, culture as self-perception, its genesis in this capacity, which results in the development of free man, is the basic idea of cultural-historical psychology. It is noted that culture, both historically and ontogenically, at least, in current historical settings, is initially created in personal form, only this enables it to acquire social significance. Culture does not only bring people together based on some formal characteristic, and within it people become significant for each other. The role of imagination in the formation of self-perception is discussed. An assumption on the availability of genetic relation between imagination and spontaneity is put forward. At that, special emphasis is placed on “experiments on consciousness”, including in the form of inversion, which are conducted by means of art.

Keywords: culture, self-perception, freedom, will, imagination, experiments on consciousness, inversion.

Freedom Mediator (introductory remarks)

At the beginning of the 21st century, thanks to L.S. Vygotsky cultural-historical psychology is making a serious bid for revealing not only the conditions (“environment”) of mental life of an individual, but also its intimate mechanisms, combining the benefits of *depth* and *vertex* psychology [11]. This belief is also supported by the searches by K.G. Jung, E. Erikson, I. Meyerson, J.-P. Vernant, and K. Suzuki, who created other versions of cultural-historical approach in psychology. They all examine culture not as an “environment” or as an external factor of mental life, but as its internal source. We may never reveal this source in the dead “psychological fossils” (P. Janet), no matter how hard we try to “revive” them in the process of interiorization. Rooting into the living soil of culture, which is creatively absorbed and recreated by real people, is the only journey to becoming a person. It is in culture (according to Vygotsky – in tools and signs, according to Jung – in archetypes and symbols, according to Meyerson and Vernant – in “creations” etc.) that an individual acquires means and powers for his spiritual growth (first of all, on oneself, and then on personal culture), and ultimately, one’s own *human character*, and not only and not so much a social pattern, and only in so far as the pattern itself.

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This gives rise to the need for understanding the specific content of “culture” construct in cultural-historical psychology, with due regard for the fact that this concept itself has historically emerged and developed. Moreover, it becomes the subject of philosophical and theoretical reflection in special humanitaristics already after L.S. Vygotsky, in the second half of the 20th century, being featured before that as a category used “by default”.

We owe the fact that this “default” category is still saturated to Emile Durkheim, French sociologist, although, to a significant extent he merely expressed the mentality of his time. Durkheim interpreted culture as a set of rigidly fixed social standards (values, norms etc.) acquired by everyone from birth that more or less rigidly and prescriptively determine the content of his or her individual experience. Then, it turns out that the real speech of a child is merely the product of acquisition of his native vocabulary and tables of grammatical meanings, the search by an adult for an ethical solution in the intricacies of unique life circumstances, it represents simple realization of a set of acquired moral standards, and the colour palette of an artistic canvas, where the creator’s original world perception shows through, is a combination of sensory standards which are familiar from childhood.

However, if culture is a giant cliché (as E.V. Ilyenkov ironically remarked [8]), on which the entire collective experience of mankind is laid, and individual conscious-

ness is merely its imprint, then where all such phenomena as human freedom and creativity come from, where the unique – particularly, but at the same time, “universal”, and not “ill” (in the language of Hegel) – individuality of a personality, and the personality itself? All the more so, because many thinkers and scientists justifiably considered and, following P.A. Florensky, still consider culture the “environment that raises and nourishes a personality” [17, p. 227].

For Vygotsky, culture in any of its developments is primarily a condition (possibility) and a tool of freedom, its mediator, as V.P. Zinchenko would say following A.F. Losev. Not only barbarians were destroying Rome, but they were impressed by what they were destroying. Among other things, they were particularly impressed by the Roman aqueduct. They got used to looking for water, or water found them sometimes in the most inopportune moment – by falling as a downpour or floods. With the help of a channel (pipe) water comes to a man itself, according to his will and in the amounts he needs. The channel, as any cultural artifact, represents the curbing of elements, “cutting-off the unnecessary” (Michelangelo), the excessive within the meaning of the supposed objective. Embodied human will. And barbarians were only familiar with the “will” of the element. Most likely, they “did not acknowledge” their own will even in the products of their fairly developed “material culture”, which they managed to create without distinguishing it from the elemental. The aqueduct, as a result and means of voluntary effort, made human will visible. It cannot be ruled out that, after personal exposure to it (and other similar inventions), the barbarians experienced their first “cultural shock”. Who knows, maybe the glimpses of the future European consciousness flashed in it.

The analogies of that may be traced in ontogenesis. A.V. Zaporozhets and L.A. Venger, his follower, created the concept of sensory standards – sculptural approach to preschool child development, when “everything unnecessary is cut off”. Not in a child’s development, but in his environment, in order to retain specifically cultural, specifically human and in this form – specifically childish. To enable the child to organize the natural chaos of the world himself, in which he will live and in which he already lives. This need is determined by culture itself.

For example, why should a child need to learn how to grasp things, if he was born with an already available grabbing (“monkey-like” according to Pavlov) reflex, and why should he develop voluntary attention, if, at the very beginning, the “concentration reflex” functions reliably, etc.? However, the grasping by a child never turns into grabbing – it just soon fades away. And the grabbing emerges again as part of the same infant animation complex, when a child clenches and unclenches his fists at the sight of an adult... Why? Because grasping is “insensitive” to the shape of an object, which appears in the hands. Especially, if that shape was created by other people, humanity, human culture. It makes no difference for a newborn child what to grasp – a hand, or a stick. However, if it’s a rattle or a spoon, then it should be specifically *grabbed*, by recreating their particular shape in the act of grabbing, in order to be able to use these items intentionally in ac-

cordance with their intended purpose (we need to repeat: human purpose). The grasping of a newborn child is purposeless. Involuntary act – represents the same “rock” of Michelangelo, which the sculptor (in the dual face of an adult and a child) will have to free from excessive of passive substance, and thereby, from the dictate of not so much external, but internal impulse.

For this purpose, motor standards, as well as sensory standards, appeared in culture (the very same rattle is the synthesis of both). A.V. Zaporozhets and L.A. Venger, his follower, did not invent sensory standards, however, they got them across to the children “on behalf of culture” in the form of its patterns. The world in culture is structured in a special way. However, culture itself appears to a little man as chaos, in which everything can become a pattern. And indeed, isn’t the “big one” unprotected in the face of the cultural chaos of “postmodernism” in the 21st century? A reference system, a guidebook for eyes, ears, and mind is required... Cognition toolkit is required in order not to “grasp” everything at random, as well as sensory standards are merely tools.

The point is not to apply a blue circle to the sky, which I was actually taught in a kindergarten to apply to other objects, but in the fact that I “know when to stop”, know how to use the cultural equivalent of blue, even if some semitones have been mingled. That is why it is very important to be able to create, to make those things with your own hands, which will be seen, by varying shape, conditions, and the standard as a whole. It’s not merely a coincidence that a unique series of studies in the sphere of child engineering were conducted in the laboratory of L.A. Venger. And sensory education became an integral part of mental, as well as artistic education later on; development of sensory and perception – formation of creativity.

And the advance from sensory standards to increasingly schematized conceptual models, and from them to the sphere of symbols – everything that a child acquired “according to Venger”, was not merely a complication of the “mediation system”. Behind a sensory standard we may “catch a glance” of another person, an adult who is “nearby”, who set this standard and, if necessary, will adjust it. This “glance” is still present in the conceptual model in a residual form, but here a child should build his own view of “life” based on it. Generalized assistance, from which no “specific recommendation” may be derived. You may find the way of action only by yourself. And the symbol completely relieves from the particulars of the “views of others”, and through it a child may only see the world and himself in it “through the eyes of humanity” as though through his own eyes.

Thus, it is true “according to Zaporozhets and Venger” and, in general, “according to Vygotsky”. Cutting off the unnecessary, sculpture of development, with only the things that are “not unnecessary” left, represents yourself – the subject, according to L.S. Vygotsky: “the master of your own behaviour”.

From this perspective, we may draw an example of one interesting interchange of ideas:

“Each new stage in life brings along new will with it” (L. Feuerbach [16, p. 435].

“A psychologist genetician is facing an extremely important mission: to find the lines in a child’s development, along which the freedom of will matures. We are facing a mission to represent gradual increase in that freedom, to reveal its mechanism, and to demonstrate it as a product of development” (L.S. Vygotsky [4, p. 290].

“Will is loneliness at the same time” – this is the aphoristic formula of Albert Camus [10, p. 300]. Loneliness in this sense is the same as your individual will – the product of suppressing the wills of others in you. Specifically, as the isolated wills, which you yourself “willed” in the absence of your own will. They were tearing you apart, and it puts you together. It collects you into “I” (the second person is always present, but the first person is yet to be acquired). And particularly, out of the “pieces” of these wills, to which you were torn apart. It is collected freely, and they remain both the material and the tool in the hands of a master. At that, synthesis (not any synthesis, but the transcendental one – as Kant would call it) results in that new and unique, quality of the “I” no longer torn apart, which was collected by an individual will “with creativity” (with the help of productive imagination, full-value co-creator of “I”). Loneliness is concentration. And here, Vygotsky, Ilyenkov and Mikhailov may be noticed behind Camus... Nietzsche (of course, along with a hovering Schopenhauer, we could not have done without him, here, at any rate) – over the other’s shoulder. However, behind it is overgrowing of “ill” individuality into absolute impersonality (its inevitability is comprehended by E.V. Ilyenkov [7]), and following that, personality that is growing historically and “biographically”. Among similar Personalities, but absolutely different *individualities* – universal, according to Hegel, and free – according to Marx. They are able to “see everything” (and themselves in everything) beyond the individual point of view context, but they are capable of taking it up at any time.

Looking through the Eyes of Culture

There are numerous definitions of culture, which, to a large extent, complement one another. I support the one suggested by E.V. Ilyenkov (I will put in on other words, and I will venture to slightly complement it, but without sacrificing the meaning): culture is something that people *create for each other* [9], and therefore, it *unites* them in space and time. That is *significant* to them, making them *not indifferent* to each other; even if they are not simply unacquainted, but even if they have no idea of each other’s existence. People who use a spoon, a fork and a knife and cannot eat in a different way, represent “one circle” of people, even though they differ infinitely from one another. So do people who read/saw “Hamlet”.

I happened to be in a funny situation in Japan. I sat down to work on a computer with Japanese language ‘MS Word’, I sat and did not hesitate to click on the menu, where everything was written in hieroglyphs. My Japanese colleagues jokingly said: “You know Japanese so well!” ‘MS Word’ is also some particular variety of “Esperanto culture”... Culture – from the domestic

household to the world’s art – is the creative and the uniting force, thanks to which people “recognize” one another and realize their affiliation to human community, while conceiving something important in themselves. And having mastered it, they start to create and unite others by doing so. By the way, a person capable of such creative power of uniting everyone was called a *personality* by Ilyenkov [8].

Culture has always been originally created in “personal form”. Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin writes a letter addressing only Anna Petrovna Kern: “I remember the magic moment ...” This is their intimate moment, belonging only to the two of them. However, Alexander Sergeyevich, who is writing these lines, is already a famous poet. And he definitely understands that “one cannot sell his inspiration, but one can sell his manuscript”. Already at the time of his intimate address to the beloved woman, he clearly admits that the lines dictated by his heart will someday be set up by a typesetter, a total stranger. And they will be read by total strangers, including schoolchildren, who one day, alas, will have to learn it by heart... However, the poems are published, and a variety of female readers living in different historical times and cultures, where the things “torn from the heart” may be read only in translation, manage to find something addressed to them personally in them. Perhaps, it’s not the author, but the beloved one, real or imaginary, that appears in the poems for them. And through these poetic lines, each of them realizes what the beloved one wanted to say to her, but was never fully understood. And the poet “finished” it for him. The poet cannot suspect the existence of such “stories of feelings” [12].

For over six centuries, Shakespeare has been teaching mankind to live humanely by its own passions. The questions of Hamlet that bring people together and which they ask themselves using the language of their epoch, their culture and their individuality... “Ideas that turned into passions” (L.S. Vygotsky) are in the air of history.

“Who has not been haunted by Hamlet’s questions at least once in his lifetime?” – writes L.S. Vygotsky in his psychological survey focused on “Hamlet” [5, p. 109]. However, “one’s own” should be realized as Hamlet’s own. At times, it should be rediscovered by observing a great “*déjà vu*” in the routine of actions, thoughts, and emotions. Not to “refine” them, but to pull this “one’s own” from their flow as carrying the sense of life, which has been dropped somewhere or has not been assigned to something, to make an existential chain to be suddenly rearranged into an “event-related” one. One can never find assistance in that either from parents, or teachers, or from psychiatrists, or confessors. One has to turn either to Shakespeare or to oneself.

Yuly Aikhenvald, literary critic, one of the teachers of Vygotsky, provided a remarkable formula: Hamlet is not on the stage, but in the audience. Let us clarify this: Hamlet is *scattered* among the audience. However, only the Hamlet on the stage is capable of “assembling” him in one viewer (assisting the viewer to be “assembled” in Hamlet) by “cutting off the unnecessary”. Only Shakespeare.

I tore the tread with friends and I was free,
The thread of Ariadne was a scheme.
I pondered on the words “to be or not to be,”
Without a resolution to be gleamed.

The sea of grief was raging more intense now,
We’d fight against it; sieving grain to net
The filtered-out, murky, obscure answer
To this pretentious question we had set.

Vladimir Vysotsky. “My Hamlet”

Billions of students have been educated in the Shakespearean “school of passions”. Each of them perceived the lessons of Shakespeare as addressed to him personally, including the “paradigmatic” ones. In adolescence and youth, the story of Veronese lovers could have caused something similar to the experience of love, that unique experience of love “in general” and not to anyone in particular. But the feeling has already been looking for its own Juliet “recognized” under completely different name. And, perhaps, it would have never been recognized in other case...

However, it was recognized, and you fell in love, and your love was stronger than that of 40 thousand brothers, but each of these brothers can say the same. However, only 10 thousand of them read or watched Shakespeare.

To put it simply, over his 52 years of life Shakespeare managed to learn more important things about us than we had learned over the 450 years since his birth.

“Shakespearean passions” compact the world in space and time. “What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba. That he should weep for her? ...”.

Redemptive tears of actors, particularly during the times, when not all viewers realize for whom the last bell tolls.

Art is an emotion of one person that was presented as a gift to the entire mankind. And science (part of culture) is exactly the same “gift” thought. The arrangement of culture life, its transfer and development in history is concealed in such creative gift presentation. And the “presenters” of culture are not only the authors of great works.

To introduce the concept of a “point” during mathematics lessons in the first form in accordance with the “School of the Dialogue of Cultures” the programme educationalist S.Y. Kurganov [14] used a simple task, which I decided to use as well by bringing it beyond mathematical content and slightly modifying it. I suggested the children (senior preschoolers during physical education classes) and adults (students during a lecture) in many countries to gather in one place so that it may be carried out in a quick and well-coordinated manner, and would look good from outside. The students, apparently “falling for” this last word, paired up and quietly danced towards each other. They managed to dance, but they failed to gather. It must be said that on the whole the students differed a little bit from preschoolers: they randomly tried to huddle together by pushing and making a noise. However, among them (more often among children!) were those few who suggested marking the place of gathering (to put a toy, a bag etc.) first, and then to gather around it without ruffle or excitement.

It is obvious that those few and the majority were solving different tasks. The majority were solving a task as to the *performance of action*, and the few — as to the *coordination of actions*. Not as to *execution*, but as to *control*. The trick here is that the first task may only be solved through solving the second. “To come together” is an overwhelming requirement for one person, if everyone will be solving the task using the “executory” method. But here someone marks the place — “invents” the sign. And this sign is a typical “object”, or rather an “agent” of culture. The place is marked with a toy or a bag, no one gathered around it yet, however, the “executory” task has actually been completed “essentially” — all that is left to do in order to comply with all of its conditions is to approach it, which does not represent any particular task.

Whoever marks the place of gathering sees the situation from the eyes of all of its participants, from the perspective of each of them. And you don’t need to put yourself in the shoes of Masha, Petya, or Dasha — it will be sufficient just to put the toy. Then, the same broad view of the situation will emerge for Masha and Petya, and Dasha. They will be able to see each other in this situation, to see themselves in one another. *Imagination* enables us to look at the situation from the perspective of different people, within the scope of the entire mankind, in order to coordinate all these perspectives in real life (E.V. Ilyenkov).

It is not difficult to distinguish the signs of *controlling actions* in the act of imagination. This leads to the hypothesis on the presence of genetic relationship between randomness and productive imagination. If we keep in mind the randomness in the perception of Vygotsky and imagination — rather in the perception of Ilyenkov than in Vygotsky’s, then control is not a specialized function, not a “profession”, but a *phenomenon* of “human in a man”. Art — as a “professionalized imagination” according to Ilyenkov — has much more power over people than the most rigid administration rules, because ultimately it becomes the form of implementation of their own free will by definition. Imagination that is internally included into a controlling action contributes to the occurrence of the same effect that is eventually psychologically represented in other forms. For example, an act of a manager will not cause catharsis, but it may become the “source of inspiration” (as reflected by life experience). In the words of F.T. Mikhailov, the prominent thinker, under the supervision of whom I was fortunate to work from my student’s days: “I don’t know how to control in the sense of “subordination”, but I know how to control in the sense of “inspiration”. V.V. Davydov, his friend and my teacher, was a typical “inspirer” in terms of control at different positions. Control “with imagination” (and there no other one exists) is a “creative occupation”. Ritual paperwork management, monitoring and accounting whirlwind of bureaucratic apparatus has nothing to do with “control”. We do not need to confuse managers with bureaucrats. Gift and function. And it is not science, but actually control — a search for the way to coordinate the activities of indefinite number of people, whom you don’t need to know by their names, —

emerges in the history of mankind as the first form of “intellectual labour”. By the way, this primacy was pointed out by the philosopher F. Engels.

Imagination is exactly the “third eye” of culture, which enables the “two other eyes” of a person to see the world humanly [for more details see: 13], when the attitude towards the world is represented in the form of self-perception.

Culture as self-perception, its genesis in this capacity, which results in the development of a free man, is a key idea of cultural-historical psychology.

A Small Solo Part of Thinking

Calendar coincidences are sometimes amazing. November 17 is the date of birth of psychologist L.S. Vygotsky and literary critic and thinker M.M. Bakhtin, two outstanding Russian humanities scientists. They are divided only by one year: Vygotsky was born in 1896, and Bakhtin in 1895, although the former lived only 37 years, and the latter almost 80 years. Here is another biographical detail: Bakhtin was born into the family of a bank employee, and the father of Vygotsky, a merchant in recent past, was employed by a bank, when his son was one year old (their family moved from Orsha to Gomel at the time).

However, the meaning to these, as well as of any other calendar coincidences, was assigned by the epoch, in which they both lived and created, simultaneously filling it with life and ultimately creating the epoch itself.

Reference to the closeness of their ideas has become a “commonplace”, although they were not acquainted with each other and were not familiar with each other’s works (at least, during the lifetime of Vygotsky): paradoxical phenomenon of their mutual “unacknowledgement” is also a commonplace in historical and scientific works. Both are well-known and popular in the West, which is quite rare for national humanitarians. Vygotsky is probably a bit more famous; though they build their practical work in such spheres as, for example, family therapy based on the concept of literary critic Bakhtin. Besides our foreign colleagues also point to the overlap of their views [see, for example: 22].

They definitely thought and wrote differently, but they thought and wrote about the same things. And it is by far more important and interesting than “the same thing”, since it represents the comprehensive similarity of thoughts. Of course, we may combine the terminology of Vygotsky and Bakhtin, by saying: for both of them the ingrown (meaning transformed) dialogue with other people, virtually with humankind, is the way of existence of individual consciousness, the operating principle of individual thinking, the “image” of spiritual life. However, that, at least today, appears almost on the surface. Besides, something similar had been written before Vygotsky and Bakhtin, was written simultaneously with them and after them (not always referring to them).

And they mean something different: about the way a person is searching for his own original place in this dialogue, one’s author’s *remark* in it. The remark in which

the unique voice of his consciousness is heard. Even if not all the participants of the dialogue hear him, even if my remark is not historically documented, its course cannot remain the same. Thinking is the process when you, without realizing it, start speaking in the voice of all thinking people, who had ever lived within the globe, but with interrogative intonation (according to Vygotsky also in terms of inner speech [3]). And then you switch over to the affirmative in your own small solo part.

Thinking is not so much a conversation with oneself, but with others in you, where they come from books, life, and imagination. Sometimes it is joined by quite unexpected partners, whom you may never be able to ask to “leave” the discussion, although you establish its rules by yourself. Or rather the old, proven like-minded people start saying unexpected, “strange” things. The creativity of thinking involves comprehension of these “values” and attempts to get to the source of these “strangeness”.

Here lies the borderland between those notions, in which one sometimes tries to catch the likeness – the introjection in psychoanalysis and interiorization according to Vygotsky.

Introjection (as interpreted by S. Ferenczi, the author of this concept, as well as by the subsequent psychoanalysts) – is a protection mechanism, when a person absorbs images, positions, attitudes etc. of people in one’s own subjective world. In psychoanalysis it is some sort of “preventive measure” aimed at reflecting by an individual possible aggression on the part of these people, society in general, aggression, which is inevitable. At the same time, it is a conditional compensation of individual capabilities limitation, roughly speaking, i.e. the compensation of “weakness” of an individual, his vulnerability in the face of powerful mankind, which by definition is smarter, more skilled and experienced.

L.S. Vygotsky’s concept of interiorization also involves the transfer of attitudes of people, which develop within the human culture, into an individual consciousness plan. Nevertheless, it bears to a large extent the opposite semantic load. According to Vygotsky, the interiorization – is not the compensation of a “weakness”, but the acquisition of “power”, independence. After all, the result of interiorization process is represented by the independent performance by an individual of an action, which has been previously performed by at least two people. Here one is not fictionally, but actually “equal” to two, three, four, a group, and humanity.

V.S. Bibler [2], while analyzing the subject-matters of Bakhtin (by the way, Bibler not only insisted with philosophical substantiation on the similarity of thought of Vygotsky and Bakhtin, but also with no less substantiation “related” it to Hegel’s), recalled Griboedov: “The same and Sofia”... Not the same – already the same, well – Sofia! Sofia is definitely a key character of the play. However... It is one thing when a story, presented in the dialogue form, is *happening* “by itself”, “without being realized” (its participation) by a significant number of people, just being marked in their biographies. And it is another thing when it is *created* by consciousness, and biography serves as the conscious “lifestyle” of a person involved in the story.

That does not require “contribution to the story” from everyone in the usual sense, so that millions of people would suddenly become “historical figures”. You just need to be a personality, which is always historical. Just thinking, realizing one’s involvement in thinking of others, no matter how different that process proceeds and where it flows into for each of them. To address one’s thinking to them and “accept by oneself” the results of their thinking. Such mutual addressing (reciprocal “communication” according to F.T. Mikhailov [15]) represent the mechanism of creating history by personalities.

Both Vygotsky and Bakhtin reflected on them, on it, on personality in human history, which lives by no means less actively within that personality than outside it – in the system of human relations, in its thoughts, emotions, and actions shared by it with others. They reflected on self-perception and self-consciousness of a personality, within the universe of which the main story of the modern world is happening.

Experiments on Consciousness and “Inversion of Common Sense”

Vitality and competitive ability of advanced technology trends directly depends on the extent, to which they represent media tools for “building relationships” of a person with oneself, and only to his extent – cultural communication tools within the human community. From there appears the illusion that by “ingrowing” the new communication means are changing us from the inside. In fact, we just register changes in our consciousness in them that are not always perceived and realize these changes through them.

What is the Internet? It is a particular world view and a particular “self-awareness”, rather than virtualization of the previous one. It is a particular type of arrangement of people’s relationships, rather than merely its technical infrastructure. However, this machine does not produce either of them. And it will never produce them at any level of technology. The hidden tectonic upheavals in our consciousness reveal themselves in the process creation of fundamentally new “machines”, about which we “learn by their fruits” – the same “machines”.

However, we can always find the forerunners among poets and writers post factum. In this case, for example, it is Velimir Khlebnokov with his “Radio of the Future” [19], under whose name, sometimes in detail, the most conventional Internet was described. Though it is delivered to radio-dishes. Or Miroslav Pavić [16], who already structured his works in hypertext format on paper. But until the “machine” appears and starts to operate, all these will look like “fantasies” or “operating whims”.

Further we find a typical “Deus ex machina” situation. The “God of Consciousness” jumps out of a “machine”, whom we imperceptibly admit with the idea of “machine”. Though, more often in the character of “jack-in-the-box”.

In their self-consciousness, people more often are as readers of life. In his “philosophy of dialogue” Bakhtin is not just developing one of the key ideas of the 20th cen-

tury humanitaristics in a particular way. He needs “Dialogue” – and, by the way, particularly in Dostoevsky’s material – to realize the Author inside, who addresses the Reader. While the creators of other variants of “dialogism” often drowned the Author in the polyphony of voices, or in the “speech of the Other”, like Lacan, who merely increased the depersonification of Freud’s “It” (Freud himself interpreted it according to the traditions of the science of objects, i.e. quite respectable science of his time), that never changes its “third person” to the “first one” etc. Even dialogism does not save from postmodernist “death of an Author”... However, Bakhtin is primarily interested in the “first person”, on behalf of whom the “second” and the “third” may at any moment start, if not speaking, then “thinking”. Or the subject, according to Vygotsky. These are not just “parallels” between Bakhtin and Vygotsky, which it had been trendy to draw from the beginning of the 80s; these are the overlaps in fundamental points.

According to Vygotsky, art is the “social mechanism of feelings” [5], a mechanism for controlling “emotional flows” (not in the terms of M. Csikszentmihalya). Bakhtin demonstrated that this “mechanism of feelings” (in terms of Bakhtin it is also the mechanism of perception) may only “operate” in dialogue with others. He did that independently from Vygotsky, but not in contradiction to him.

However, any art is in some sense the “stream of consciousness”: of an author and a character, as well as that of a reader, viewer, listener, the conscience of whom he catches inward. But that stream is not a conventional one that describes everyday experiences and feelings, whichever bizarre forms they may take, but the one that is directed by the image and is controlled by it. An image determines that bed and those banks, in which it will plunge. Truly amazing experiments may be conducted on consciousness by varying the design of the banks in compliance with the created image. Such were the experiments conducted by James Joyce, the famous Irish writer.

Joyce’s most famous experiment was called “Ulysses”, and it consisted of 18 series (episodes) [6]. This is a novel-story of one day, a “stream of consciousness novel” (as it is called by literary critics), narrating about the eternity in the language of unpredictable thoughts, boiling emotions, explosive human relationships – everything in which the spirit and the soul of the Joyce’s epoch revealed themselves. However, “Ulysses” as much, if not more, narrates about the very thoughts, emotions and relationships, which can be truly comprehended only through immersion in historically polyphonic eternity. And for that purpose Joyce reproduced (as he expressed himself) the “architecture of Homer’s “Odyssey” in his novel. But in inverted form, by turning the cultural hero Odysseus (Ulysses – in the Latin tradition) in an advertising agent, faithful Penelope – into a frivolous cheat, the world – into the city of Dublin... The meeting between Telemachus and Proteus – in fact, into a dialogue, which one of the central characters, Stephen is engaged with himself (this is suggested by the analysis of the novel performed by S. Khoruzhy [20])... Or, rather,

into polylogue, where there's place both for the remark of Aristotle, and the word of Shakespeare.

Even though Joyce still remains nearly the most widely-recognized novelist in the world, he is not the writer for masses. And the case is not even in the complexity of a form invented by him with mostly simple plots. And it's not at the cultural and educational level of a reader. I'm acquainted with highly educated people, who "fell out of the race" when reading the same "Ulysses" (I managed to finish only the second time, at a mature age). Nevertheless in the 20s – 40s of the last century Joyce was one of the most popular authors among the reading public. Even if we ignore that part of it, which was attracted by literary provocation.

The point is time. As you know, the epoch of Joyce is identified with Art Nouveau, and his works with – the "ninth wave" of Modernism. Art Nouveau, Modernism (particularly, Postmodernism) – are of course, idle markers. However, if something is marked by them, then it is the unique "culture", where the experiments with the "streams of consciousness" enable people to find the key to understanding the structure of their own human world, their place in it and in its history, and thereby to touch the main secrets of consciousness itself. Such experiments were conducted at that time in painting, poetry, music, cinematography, and architecture. I'm not going to introduce the comprehensive and heterogeneous list of prominent "experimentalists" in each of these fields.

The truth is that several decades before Modernism loudly proclaimed itself, F.M. Dostoyevsky, the Russian writer, had been successfully experimenting with the "streams of consciousness", without stepping out of the soil of Classicism. But, perhaps, it's not a mere coincidence that these experiments received a distinct response only in the 20th century by the geniuses born or who proved themselves during the time of Art Nouveau, those who created that time: Kafka, Freud, Bakhtin... and, by the way, Joyce himself, who realized what would be the things the "stream of consciousness" controlled by an artist would inevitably bring to the world. And human consciousness would become his self-consciousness.

Life is inverted in self-consciousness out of necessity. Sometimes some people complain: too much "gibing", however, everything is serious. First of all, I disagree that gibing, high-quality mockery, is not a serious thing. Do you remember Dovlatov's words "Humour is the inversion of common sense"? Common sense is a good thing: firstly, it's narrow-minded, referenced to a situation or to a standard set of situations, and secondly, it is clumsy in this reference.

Sometimes an inversion, a turnover is required to make senseless something that long ago in and by itself lost any sense and particularly, its significance. And the collective consciousness is stuck in phantom values and is suffering from phantom pain caused by semantic castration, as if this surgery is performed by cutting to the quick and without anesthesia. Inversion does not only touche on the raw, but amuses when touching it. It resembles Vygotsky's children's game: a child is crying as a patient and is rejoicing as a player. This cultural signifi-

cance of humour, irony, comic etc. was differently and extensively described by philosophy and special humanitaristics.

It seems difficult, almost hopeless, when the "delirium level" of Tsvetayeva rises above the "quality of life", as well as above the level of gibing. That is when "delirium" cannot be mocked any more, since it is capable of coping with this task itself, without any assistance and better than the mocker. The mockers left without work surrender themselves to despair. This is where backup, objective, and impersonal culture mechanism is launched, the mechanism of rendering senseless the values that have lost their significance, the performance of which exceeds the effect from the efforts of a dozen of Swifts. Nevertheless, those Swifts prepare the conditions for their launch.

It looks like the power ready indicator is flashing with all its might now...

Literature is the unwritten. It's not even writing itself. Literature is something that is heard and narrated in a special way. "Inversion of common sense" of a narrator in a literary word.

"Inversion of common sense" is the definition, which can be applied to literature as well. Inversion is the case of "distancing", which Viktor Shklovsky [21] viewed not only as a writer's trick, or method, but also as a mechanism of Pasternak's phenomenon of the image of the world in a word, "creativity and thaumaturgy".

In the literary word, this world turns a cartwheel – makes a U-turn. It comes into its own sometimes almost naked – during the inversion process all common sense clichés fall off it (common sense without clichés, and specifically universalized, "ad hoc" common sense "not only has the right to exist, but it is also vitally important). Yes, the world on its feet and naked often looks comically, but tragically – even more often.

A writer is definitely not interested in what is standing on its head, only in what it narrates about reality and itself from such a position. And it tells a lot of interesting things. For example, how the Sun revolves around the Earth (common sense!), and the fact that all problems on Earth are caused by its obsessive revolution...

How did Dovlatov put it? "The world is embraced by madness. Madness becomes a standard. A standard excites the sensation of a miracle"...

Literature, art, and creativity in general, are merely ways of generating a standard, which may excite such sensation, and not only in this mad world.

That is why L.S. Vygotsky's psychology of art (psychology of creativity) represents a key to the psychology of a human being, who, from the very beginning, creates standards for his existence in the human realm in different forms.

A.V. Zaporozhets, the follower of Vygotsky, described how children of 2 to 3 years of age performed physical exercises. A teacher demonstrates the correct way of making a movement, and it is still difficult for a child to identify it as a model in the total flow of movements that he observes. They can definitely "mimic", or "copy" the external pattern of movements, which children at this age manage to do quite successfully. However, intelligent retrieval of a standard from it is

beyond their power. However, what arouses interest is that children immediately notice how their peers make mistakes and can correct them. Why? Because the realization at that time is arranged so that the child does not only fail to identify the standard from the flow of complex movements, but he actually fails to identify himself in the world of people. He views someone's movement mistake as his own (you cannot yet examine your own), and only through it associates his own movement with the standard. Your bump is raised on the forehead of your neighbour. What is important — on the “real” forehead.

According to Vygotsky, it is the “intrapyschic” form of his consciousness, he faces his problem outwardly. Without being stuck in the chaos of his own experience, the “order” from which is only expected to be created, and what is more, by oneself, even though through the cultural pattern, which was originally comprehended through what and how the peer is doing. Then “chaos”

gradually becomes “controllable”. And the standard enters the child's life consciously, rather than a fragment of “nonsense” from the world of adults. Indeed, sometimes it remains as such. At school, children often have trouble in understanding what they are given this or that mark for, and they view the mark itself merely as a teacher's “whim”. Because they are not capable of *evaluating* their action (response, solution) irrespective of what mark was given. They remain the slaves of a grade, while evaluation means freedom. Independent critical, *developing*, voluntary action of a child based on cultural tools (standard, pattern, model etc.) — represent the phenomenon, which, in fact, was discovered by Vygotsky to be used in psychology and education.

Unfortunately, Vygotsky's discovery of, which appears to be critical for education, is sought-after by education only within the framework of “experimental field”, which, as a matter of fact, is ever-contracting. However, this is the topic for a separate discussion.

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