

To the 120th anniversary of P.Ya. Galperin

P.Ya. Galperin's Psychology and its Cultural-Historical Analysis in the Book by V.I. Oleshkevich



It happened so that the book by Valery Ivanovich Oleshkevich comes out on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of Pyotr Yakovlevich Galperin, who was born on October 2, 1902. It comes out when Valery Ivanovich himself is no longer alive and his book was not completely finished. Nevertheless, even in this unfinished form (with a working title, without the author's preface, with an unfinished work on the list of literary references), the book seems to be valuable material for reflection on P.Ya. Galperin's role, his place in the history of psychology, the development of his scientific ideas and philosophies, the prospects for the further development of his concept.

One of the advantages of the book is that two lines intersect in it — the subject aspect of the science created by P.Ya. Galperin and the personal aspect of the creator. V.I. Oleshkevich is trying not only to present P.Ya. Galperin's philosophy but to see it in a cultural-historical context, to understand it as a «product» of a certain time, an extremely difficult period of national history in which this system was created.

One might and should argue with the author's opinion, but it must be taken into account, and it is important for understanding the huge period in the development of Russian psychology, which is associated with the name of Pyotr Yakovlevich Galperin. It is also important because V.I. Oleshkevich goes far beyond the current understanding of P.Ya. Galperin's contribution to psychology as, first of all, the author of the theory and method of the phased (planned) formation of mental actions and concepts. The book contains an analysis of lectures by P.Ya. Galperin, which he read on general psychology, correlates his theory and position with modern concepts, and provides the first attempt to consider P.Ya. Galperin's views in a broader cultural-historical, culturological, philosophical context.

The book by V.I. Oleshkevich includes two parts, each of which contains a detailed rubrication, which greatly facilitates orientation in the content of the book, setting its «orientation basis». Due to such detail-

ing, each paragraph takes two or three, a maximum of five pages of text. The only exception is the conclusion, which occupies a slightly larger volume.

Part one is devoted to the psychology of P.Ya. Galperin. It begins with a description of the personality and social history of Pyotr Yakovlevich himself. Then the following questions are analyzed: the essence of P.Ya. Galperin' activity approach, the concept of the psyche, the main ideas of interiorization, the structure of orienting activity, and the conditions for the formation of «mental action», the mechanisms for chunking and automating the formed action, the analysis of individual mental functions. A special place, in accordance with the internal logic of the concept by Petr Yakovlevich, is given to the analysis of different (both in function and in structure) levels of reinforcement of certain types of orienting actions. Further, a significant part of the text is devoted to problems that go beyond the theory of stage-by-stage formation: the problem of feelings and social intelligence; problems of will, morality, and responsibility. The completion of the first part is devoted to the correlation between Soviet and Western philosophy and an attempt to outline «new perspectives of formation» in the cultural-historical context.

The second part is devoted to the cultural-historical analysis of P.Ya. Galperin's ideas. The author conducts a special analysis in it aimed at establishing links and relations between P.Ya. Galperin's scientific views and the world in which he lived and which was reflected in the ideas developed by P.Ya. Galperin – ideas about the psyche, formation, orientation, mind, and a man. Of particular interest here is not only the correlation between P.Ya. Galperin and such historical figures as Plato or Descartes but also an analysis of the connection between Petr Yakovlevich's methodological reflection and his conscious self-restraint.

There is something to think about, something to argue about, something to discuss...

However, in any case, the book by V.I. Oleshkevich will help specialists take a fresh look at the legacy of P.Ya. Galperin and, hopefully, will encourage them to further develop his creative heritage...

*V.K. Zaretsky,
PhD in Psychology,
Professor of the Department of Individual and Group Psychotherapy
Faculty of Counseling and Clinical Psychology,
Moscow State University Psychology and Education
(FGBOU VO MSUPE), Moscow, Russia*