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On the Phenomenon of “Perezhivanie”

The author presents a short historical review of the concept of “perezhivanie” beginning with L.S. Vygotsky. She compares this concept with reflection as two central concepts revealing a person’s consciousness. A systemic picture of these two phenomena is elaborated by introducing a hierarchy of reflection. A further step is made that relates the “perezhivanie–reflection” system to (psychoanalytic) self-formations. Empirical studies shed light on phenomena connected to “perezhivanie.”

Human emotion, embodying the subjective principle and possessing such important and deep-seated significance for the existence of every individual, has not been given sufficient attention by contemporary science. Since psychology first emerged as an independent science, academic psychologists have focused their primary attention on either human behavior or the human consciousness as the reflection of its realization. In the 1880s and 1890s, Wilhelm Dilthey, an original but “little-known” thinker (in the words of Nikolai N. Lange) and founder of a philosophy of life, proposed the category of emotion as the cornerstone of psychology. He felt that the laws and methods of the natural sciences—meaning the laws of the physical and biological world—could not be justifiably applied to mental reality (Kamenskaia, 1999). At this stage in the development of scientific thought such reductionism of cognition (“explanatory” psychology, as

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Dilthey called it) became well-known by the names of naturalist theories of mind (physicalism, physiological reductionism, nativism, and evolutionary epistemology) (Jung, 2007).

The phenomena of the mental world have a fundamentally distinct existence that is subject to the laws of subjective being and lacks any analogue either in the world of physical material or in the world of biological organisms. Dilthey wrote that the primary distinction between sciences of the mind and natural sciences is that in the case of the latter, information comes from without through the mediation of the senses as singular phenomena, while for sciences of the mind they come immediately from within as reality and as a certain living connection (Dmitrieva, 1998). Subjective being demands other approaches, other research methods. *“We explain nature, we understand mental life. Inner experience gives processes of influence, the nexus of functions as separate members of mental life into a single whole. The experienced complex here is primary, the discrimination of its separate members is a subsequent matter . . . it is specifically connected complexes that are originally and continually given in experience; life exists everywhere only in the form of a connected complex”* (Dmitrieva, 1998, p. 19).

“Explanatory psychology” studies the symbols of the world, which are indeed what constitute it [explanatory psychology]. “Insofar as consciousness makes itself, it is never anything but what it appears to be” (Sartre, 1948, p. 46). At the same time as Dilthey’s “comprehending psychology” calls for investigation of the inner world based on the inner laws that govern its immediate presentation, where, as Jean Paul Sartre put it, absolutely everything is connected. The emotion category is key in “comprehending psychology”; it demands other approaches and methods for its investigation, perhaps even necessitating the complete transformation of the science of psychology.

In Russia, the first person to address the category of “perezhivanie” was Lev S. Vygotsky, who proposed it as a dynamic unit of consciousness. Another leader in Russian psychology, Sergei L. Rubinshtein, also pointed to the primacy of “perezhivanie” and included it among the components of consciousness (Rubinshtein, 1946; Sartre, 1984; Vygotsky, 1982). He wrote that there are two aspects to consciousness, knowledge and “perezhivanie,” which are bound in a unity of interpenetration. Furthermore, ‘perezhivanie’ is primary first and foremost as a mental fact, as a piece of the very life of a flesh-and-blood individual, a specific manifestation of his individual life” (Rubinshtein, 1946, p. 6). He underscored that “perezhivanie” is a given in mental phenomena, that mental phenomena are given to us in the form of immediate experience. Many well-known thinkers (Immanuel Kant, Edmund Husserl, Sartre, Rubinshtein, Vygotsky, and others) have written about the

fact that awareness of the world comes in the form of immediate experience. Their writings assign the category of “perezhivanie” its ontological status: the very existence of mental reality is realized in the form of “perezhivanie.” This same thought could also be expressed thus: “perezhivanie” *is a given, a form of existence of the human mind*. Human existence, Man’s subjective principle, is realized through “perezhivanie.” It is specifically through “perezhivanie” that human existence in ontogenesis develops, forms, and is transformed.

Vygotsky saw the development that occurs over the course of a human life as the history of “perezhivanie” that shape personality. “Within ‘perezhivanie’ is given, on the one hand, the environment, in its relationship to me, and on the other, the particular features of my personality” (Vygotsky, 1982, p. 995). The power of the environment “acquires guiding significance due to children’s ‘perezhivanie.’ This obliges us to perform in-depth internal analysis of children’s ‘perezhivanie’—that is, to study the environment that is largely carried over into the child” (ibid.). His ideas fit with the research of Heinz Hartmann (1939) and, later, Donald Winnicott (1956), who strove to more precisely delineate the influence of innate, constitutional factors on the process of child development on the one hand and acquired experience and surroundings on the other (Tyson and Tyson, 2006). Contemporary psychoanalytic research has identified innate abilities that define the boundaries within which developing mental structures can later function, and these structures, in turn, will later determine the characteristics and quality of “perezhivanie.” As John D. Benjamin has noted, “Innate differences in the organization of drives and functions of ego and the rate of maturation can not only condition different reactions to objectively identical “perezhivanie”—*they can also determine what “perezhivanie” will be experienced and how they will be perceived*” (Benjamin, 1961, p. 19 [retranslated from the Russian]).

This thinking could be continued by Sartre, who reasoned that the body has a twofold nature: “which is, on the one hand, an object in the world and, on the other, something directly lived by consciousness” (Sartre, 1948, p. 75). We can then grasp the essential point: emotion is a phenomenon of belief. “Consciousness does not limit itself to projecting affective signification upon the world around it. It lives through the new world, which it has just established. It lives it directly; it is interested in it; it endures the qualities that behavior has set up. This signifies that when, with all paths blocked, consciousness precipitates itself into the magical world of emotion, it does so by degrading itself; it is a new consciousness facing the new world” (ibid., pp. 75–76). This new consciousness “transforms its body as synthetic totality in such a way that it can live and grasp this new world through it” and understand this new world. Carl Jung wrote that for earlier forms of societies, the “magical” was

simply another word for the mental, and what is referred to here is another reality, the reality of the spirit world that, in terms of the results of experienced perception or awareness of reality, is no less real than the material world (Benjamin, pp. 80–81). Thus, this new consciousness of a new world that Sartre considered a fall into a magic world, was for Jung a touching, a coming into contact with one's own inner world that gives man new possibilities that did not exist under consciousness's former regime.

Felix Krueger, a German psychologist and philosopher and founder of the Leipzig school of psychology wrote that underlying "perezhivanie" are special integral, long-standing formations that they call "structures." They are identified in individual and super-individual structures of the soul and in spiritual object structures. These structures are manifested in the mind's "perezhivanie" (Kostin, 2000).

Study of the phenomena of "perezhivanie" was undertaken within the traditions of Russian psychology, specifically within the context of consciousness, and this approach has proved extremely fruitful. "Perezhivanie" was seen as a component of consciousness. We investigated the interconnections between the components of "perezhivanie" and the structural elements of consciousness. The approach that has taken shape in Russian psychology to analyzing the structure of consciousness was adopted.

Vygotsky has written that in consciousness, as in thinking, it is possible to identify two layers: consciousness for consciousness and consciousness for being (Vygotsky, 1982). A.N. Leontiev, continuing the course of research into consciousness first set by Vygotsky, posed the question of what comprises consciousness, how it emerges, and what its sources are. He identified three constituents of consciousness: the sensory fabric of an image, meaning, and personal sense (Slobodchikov and Isaev, 1995). V.P. Zinchenko includes existential and reflective layers among the structures of consciousness. The *existential layer* is comprised of the *biodynamic fabric of living movement and action* and the *sensory fabric of an image*. The *reflective layer* is comprised of *meaning* and *sense* (Galperin and Zhdan, 2002). We will briefly identify these structures of consciousness.

Meaning (znachenie). Meaning is the persistent system of generalizations that stands behind a word and is the same for all people. Meaning enables communication and understanding between people and serves as an envoy between consciousnesses. The general function of meaning is preserving and transmitting social experience, ensuring that it can be reproduced (Rubinshtein, 1989). *Sense (smysl)*. The contemporary distinction between the concepts of "meaning" and "sense" in Russian psychology is based on the following understanding: meaning exists within the sphere of cultural conventions,

while sense is localized in the mental sphere of those participating in the process of cognition, of activity, and of communication through the use of signs (*znaki*), including autocommunication. While meaning is an objective reflection of a system of connections and relationships, sense is the infusion of subjective aspects of meaning in accordance with a given moment and situation (*ibid.*).

Biodynamic fabric. This is a generalized term for various characteristics of living movement and external action. Biodynamic fabric is an observable and recordable external form of living movement seen by N.A. Bernstein as a functional organ of the individual (*individ*) (Galperin and Zhdan, 2002). *Sensory fabric.* This is a generalized term for various perceptual categories (space, movement, color, form, etc.) that together make an image (Speeth, 1989, p. 190). Like biodynamic fabric, it is the material out of which an image is made. "The special function of conscious sensory images," wrote A.N. Leontiev, "is that they lend a sense of reality to the conscious picture of the world that appears before the subject. . . . It is specifically because of the sensory content of consciousness that the world appears to the subject as something that exists not in consciousness, but outside his consciousness—as an objective 'field' and an object of his activity" (Leontiev, 1983, p. 134).

We conducted research into the components of consciousness and the nature of "perezhivanie." In our experiment we used a custom-designed test questionnaire titled "The Structure of Consciousness," which included a rating scale for Meaning, Sense, the Biodynamic Fabric of an Action, and the Sensory Fabric of an Image based on the theories of Vygotsky, A.N. Leontiev, and Zinchenko and observed psychometric procedures, as well as a custom-designed questionnaire titled "perezhivanie," which featured a rating scale for Spatial, Temporal, Energetic, and Informational features of "perezhivanie." The experiment was conducted on a group of 650 students (both male and female) from Tatar State University of the Humanities and Education. After being prepared, subjects were shown a picture with rich psychological content for three to five minutes, and after the viewing students completed the questionnaires, using them to describe their "perezhivanie" and state of consciousness. Our experimental studies identified correlations between indicators of "perezhivanie" and the reflective layer of consciousness (using the "Sense" scale). The experiment demonstrated the special connection between human "perezhivanie" and the sense sphere of consciousness and the reflective aspect of mental reality.

Reflection is viewed by many Russian researchers as a unit of consciousness. Anatolii V. Karpov, for example, believes that reflection is a processual act of consciousness, its processual content. In the process of reflection, in the

reflective regulation of activity, behavior, and interaction, all known mental processes (as well as those that are unknown) are given—by definition—specifically as a whole, as an organized structure (Karpov, 2004, p. 105). He thus essentially introduces reflection as a unit of consciousness because reflection, in his opinion, integrally and completely represents consciousness. Furthermore, “reflection, as a process (or as a macroprocess, to be exact), is constructed on a principle of levels; it is as if its level structure reproduces the main levels of the cognitive hierarchy overall” (ibid., p. 112). As Karpov demonstrates, the range of different reflective processes and phenomena is truly unparalleled: from elementary vague “self-sensation” to maximally deployed, refined, and even ingenious forms of self-awareness. He arrives at this conclusion by analyzing the terminological resources of psychology distinguishing between the processual manifestations of reflection. Among these he includes the following concepts: self-sensation, self-perception, auto-representation, “self-directed” attention, “memory about memory”—meta-memory, and “thinking about thinking”—meta-thinking.

The interaction between “perezhivanie” and reflection represents a dialectic unity between the irrationally interacting subjective and objective principles of the mind. The human subjective principle is maximally embodied in “perezhivanie,” and the reflective, objective aspect of mind is maximally embodied in reflection. Thus, *reflection expresses the reflective component of the mind that actively transforms reflected reality, which is refracted through the levels of the cognitive hierarchy and uncovered by us as a dialectic opposite of “perezhivanie” that, together with reflection, forms a unity within the context of consciousness.*

If we remove reflection from this unity, then man returns to a state of low awareness similar to the state of people with severe structural damage to the cerebral cortex who in medical practice are aptly termed “vegetables,” since their existence is extremely plant-like. When people are deprived of “perezhivanie,” they are transformed into something that in cybernetics is called a “finite state machine” (a device that can be in one of a finite number of states and is described in terms of the logic by which the states alternate). There are a great number of such finite state machines, from the simplest drink dispensers to the most complex computers.

Our research revealed a *different quality to the nature of “perezhivanie” and reflection.* In the terminology of the system approach, *they constitute a “system complex.”* The term “system complex” reflects the nature of complicated interactions between systems and represents a certain multitude of system objects with different qualities that interact among themselves in the necessary way (Leontiev, 1979). In this definition the main emphasis is on

the *qualitative differentness of the system's objects* and the *presence of connections between them to form a certain unity*. The concept of “unity” here supplants the concept of “wholeness” (*tselostnost'*) that is traditional for system theory and emphasizes the diversity of interacting objects. “Unity,” thus, is achieved in the structure of the system complex by overcoming the qualitative differences of the systems. At the same time, the need for such coordination, as noted by Iu.Ia. Golitsin and A.N. Kostin, “places significant limitations on the diversity of possible types of intersystem interaction and therefore systems in many ways lose their independence (Martsinkovskaia, 2004, p. 29). The living cell of the mind, the breakup of which would mean the end of life, is, in my view, the unity of “perezhivanie” and reflection that carries within it the entirety of mental life.

Our subsequent study of the phenomena of “perezhivanie” investigated the patterns of relationships between “perezhivanie” and the levels and forms of reflective consciousness. We used a structure proposed by V.I. Slobodchikov and E.I. Isaev where reflection was viewed as an integral act that came into being—both in a specific situation and in genesis—over the course of its emergence through a number of levels: the levels of assumptive, comparative, defining, synthesizing, and transcendental reflection (Slobodchikov and Isaev, 1995).

Assumptive reflection produces the first distinction between a person's self and his life activity across the broad spectrum of the possible expectations associated with this activity. Assumptive reflection first delineates the self from the nonself. The self is merely given a negative definition as pure negation, as the nonself.

Comparative reflection. All positive definitions of the nonself become definitions of self: “I know this and this (I am familiar with this), I am a part of all this, there is no longer a nonself, there is only all-encompassing obviousness, the being of what is.”

Defining reflection first reveals the divergence and oppositeness of the self (the subject or agent) and nonself (the object) (Figure 1).

Defining reflection is realized in the form of a concept that also takes the form of the givenness of a certain objectness and as the means of its reproduction. The singularity of such a situation can be expressed in the following way: “I know that; and I know that I know that; however, I do not know that I am a part of that!” The discovery of this last circumstance is the manifestation of the following form of reflection.

Synthesizing reflection. Many structures of the self are recognized as nonself, alien, unknown. In every structure the self is defined by the luminescence of the nonself, object reality loses its apartness and independence of being.

Figure 1. Defining Reflection: The Self Stands in Opposition to the Nonsself, the Essence of the Object Is Revealed, but the Self Acquires Negativeness, “Nonbeing”

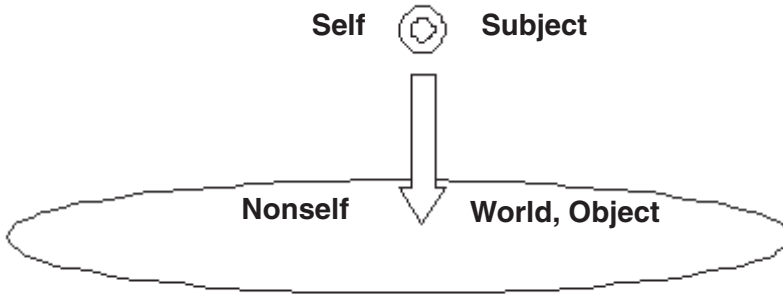
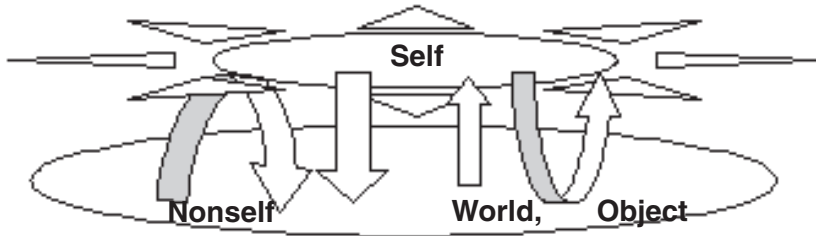


Figure 2. Synthesizing Reflection. The Self Finds Its Connection with the World, and Many Structures of the Self Are Recognized as Nonsself, Alien, Unknown



The synthesized self uncovers its connections with the World, its rootedness in it. Only the object world associated with the inner-self is endowed with its own genuine life and existence. At this level of reflection, the subject undergoes genuine personality development, the ability to feel, to encounter Reality and live in contact with it.

Synthesizing reflection is the first step on the path toward removing the opposition of subject and object; object reality loses its apartness and independence of being from my consciousness. Only associated with the self (integrated into it), this reality is endowed with genuine life and the process of existence (Figure 2).

Only at this point is the synthesized “inner self” capable of accepting its genuine immanence in the World in all its dimensions (axiological, moral, aesthetic, theoretical) and of discovering its rootedness in it, and not only its

being or interaction with it, and in so doing completely leaves the boundaries not only of self, but of its own relationships with the world. In this quality it becomes the following form of reflection.

Transcendental reflection, or “expanding consciousness,” makes it possible to go beyond the bounds not only of self, but of one’s own relationships with the world.

Research was done into the relationship between the levels of reflective consciousness and the features of experience. A custom-designed questionnaire entitled “Levels of Reflective Consciousness” was used for the experiment that featured “Assumptive,” “Comparative,” “Defining,” “Synthesizing,” and “Transcendental” levels and that observed psychometric procedures, as well as the “perezhivanie” questionnaire described above. The experiment was conducted on the same subjects; its sequence is described above. Our experiment demonstrated correlations between indicators of “perezhivanie” and the indicator for synthesizing reflection. Experimental data revealed a special connection between “perezhivanie” and the synthesizing level of reflection, where the subject begins to recognize structures in his own individual mental world that take shape under the influence of the environment (family, society at large, other significant people, culture, works of literary fiction, artists, etc.). In this inner discovery yet another fact is concealed that has revolutionary implications for the entire development of personality, since the individual begins to ask himself sacral questions: “And where am I in all this? Who am I? What is my nature? What am I living for? What is my purpose?” and so forth. The synthesizing level of reflection permits a person to, for the first time, encounter his true, inner self, his own nature, to sense himself in his interconnections with the outside world, to feel himself rooted in the world, but still representing a separate, unique being with his own Fate. It is specifically this synthesizing level of reflection that provided a reliable correlation with indicators of “perezhivanie.” It is interesting that “perezhivanie” embodies the subjective, primary, natural principle correlates with the level of reflection at which this principle begins to be aware of itself as a subject.

These results forced me to consider theories of self as understood in psychoanalytic and humanistic traditions. These are the areas of psychology that study the inner, unconscious, natural principle, and also the spiritual principle, which sets us apart from animals. “This ‘something’ is alien to us, but at the same time extraordinarily familiar; it is so much ours, yet unrecognizable for us, it is the virtual center of an apparatus so mysterious that it may claim anything—kinship with animals and gods, with crystals and stars—without shocking us, even without provoking us to refuse to recognize it” (Benjamin, 1961, p. 142). When there is awareness and experience of

one's own selfhood, the quality of human life changes and a process of individuation is activated that stimulates the emergence of individuality. Within the framework of humanistic psychology, this instance is denoted by the term "inner self" (Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow). Maria Villas-Boas Bowen writes, "Personality change in the process of psychotherapy is the result of contact with our own essence, a consequence of calming and strengthening the uncontrolled mind, that allows us to feel our inner self and act while relying on this source of strength and wisdom" (Bowen, 1992, p. 24 [retranslated from the Russian]). In psychosynthesis, the term the "higher I" is used to denote this center of the mind, hidden behind the "shell of personality" and constituting the "heart of the human psyche" (Roberto Assagioli): "The Higher I in psychosynthesis is defined as ontological reality, as being (I AM), that appears at its level as an unchanging Center of Life, the source of energy that radiates it" (Assagioli, 1994, p. 185).

Within Russian psychology it was typical to equate personality and essence (the inner self), which meant the loss, the total alienation of personality from its essence (Orlov, 2002). For example, A.N. Leontiev wrote, "Personality . . . its Copernican understanding: I find/I have my 'I' not in myself (other people see it in me), but existing outside me—in a conversation partner, a loved one, nature, and also in the computer, in the System" (Orlov, 2002, p. 241). An orientation toward the socialization of personality served as a counterbalance or was pursued at the expense of its individualization and, furthermore, the spontaneity of development was completely ignored and even denied. Man was denied his own essence other than social essence (*ibid.*).

Jung wrote that ignoring the individual means, naturally, the stifling of everything that is unique, and this eradicates the element of development from the community. He wrote that there is a tremendous temptation to permit collective functioning to take the place of personality development. "Once the personality has been differentiated and safeguarded by magical prestige, its leveling down and eventual dissolution in the collective psyche (e.g., Peter's denial) occasion a 'loss of soul' in the individual, because an important personal achievement has been either neglected or allowed to slip into regression" (Jung, 1990, p. 151).

A fundamental conception underlying this work is Gunter Ammon's understanding of the structure of personality (Zinchenko, 1991). Ammon sees personality as a complex, multilevel structural formation that separates the primary organic structures involved in human neurophysiological and biological functions, *central unconscious functions*, such as aggression, fear, narcissism, sexuality, and so on, from *secondary, conscious functions*, including "perezhivanie" of a subject, behavior, capabilities, and skills.

For Ammon, a foundational concept of personality is self-identity, which constitutes a nuclear psychological formation that ensures the integrity of personality and is intimately tied to central mental functions. The activity of central functions is mediated by identity and mediates it. Secondary functions are the behavioral realization of central self-functions, mediated by bodily (biological, somatic, physiological, and neurophysiological) features of the individual. Self-identity, as Ammon understands it, corresponds to the traditional psychoanalytic understanding of self.

Central self-functions, the structure, the relationship among components, the features of their construction, are part of the mother-child symbiotic relationship of the preverbal, pre-Oedipal period, up to approximately age three. Symbiotic relationships can be constructive, destructive, and deficient in nature. *Constructive* relationships presume caring, consistent, and successive behavior on the part of the mother toward the child in an atmosphere of positive emotion that enables the expansion and integration of personality and permits optimal adaptation to the environment. *Destructive* relationships emerge due to a hostile, rejecting attitude by the primary group that leads to deformation of the child's personality structures, disintegration of the emerging self-identity (nuclear, central psychological formations), and to rigid reaction and maladjustment in his relationships with the environment. *Deficient* relationships are associated with a cold, indifferent attitude by the primary group, which hinders the emergence of personality and the development and differentiation of central self-functions and reduces the intensity of dynamic interpersonal interactions. Attitudes in the primary group are reflected in the character of the central self-functions of the adult individual: constructive, deconstructive, or deficient.

Research was conducted into the characteristics of experience in adults depending on their relationships within the primary group (mother-child) during the preverbal developmental period. Ammon's Ego-Structure Test was used for the experiment and all psychometric procedures were observed (Zinchenko, 1991). The test's construction reflects theoretical understandings about the structure and developmental features of the central Ego functions. The test includes eighteen scales organized into six separate segments corresponding to the central ego functions *aggression, anxiety, narcissism, sexuality, outer-ego division, inner-ego division*. Each of these Ego functions are described using three separate scales, which makes it possible to assess how strongly expressed constructive, destructive, and deficient components of these central personality formations are. All of these segments include constructive, destructive, and deficient scales.

The study investigated the relationship between indicators of experience and indicators of such central ego-functions as narcissism, sexuality, aggres-

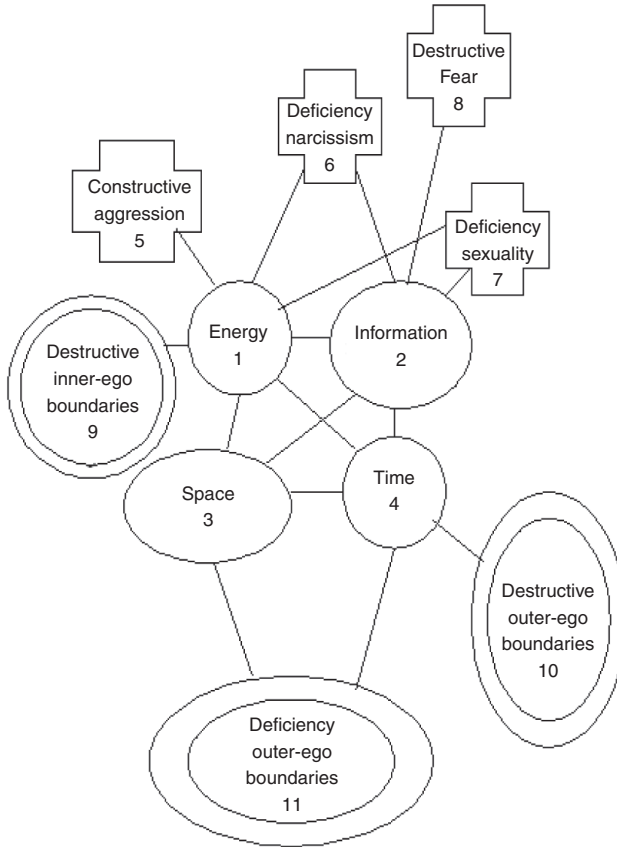
sion, and fear and indicators of how well-formed the inner and outer boundaries of the ego were. The central ego functions and boundaries of ego are formed and exist in close interaction with self, the essence of man, his inner Ego (as per Jung, Rogers, Maslow, and others). It was therefore interesting to research the interconnections between central ego functions and subjects' "perezhivanie" characteristics. The experiment results are schematically depicted in Figure 3.

The experiment revealed that energy and informational characteristics reliably correlated with narcissism and sexuality, which, according to psychoanalytic theory, are most closely associated with the mind's "core," its selfhood, its inner Ego. Here "sexuality" means the ability to establish constructive, close relationships on a physical, emotional, and spiritual level, the ability to enter into close relationships without fear and to break them off without a sense of guilty when feelings no longer exist. The ability to undergo energetically expressed, intense, strong, and keen "perezhivanie" and the level of awareness of them can reflect the degree of development and functionality of structures of self. The spatiotemporal components of "perezhivanie" depend more on the level of development, flexibility, plasticity, and penetrability of the outer boundary of the self, the boundaries of a person's contact with the outer world and the outer environment.

Vygotsky noted that up to the age of two, the child sees himself as pure essence (self), manifesting his natural inclinations, strivings, qualities and features. But after two, under the influence of society, under the influence of upbringing, acculturation, the effect of the social environment, his essence becomes encased in personality (Vygotsky, 1982). The focus on the demands of society without consideration of the features of the inner-self and counteracting it, leads to the disharmonious development of essence and personality at the expense of development and the maturation of structures of self. At the same time, hyperdevelopment of personality overwhelms the most sacred part of the mind, the part that determines individuality, identity (*samobytnost'*), its genuine being, existence. Meanwhile, for the harmoniously developed whole person, another correlation is expected: a powerful, strong, inner core determines the development of his personality structure, which is an auxiliary organ of adaptation, of a person's success in society.

How does such a suppression of the inner self occur? What is the mechanism by which we become alienated from our own essence? How do we become shut off from inner reality, given that contact with one's inner self improves social adaptation? Natalie Rogers asserts that her psychotherapeutic experience shows that there is a "connection between our life force—our inner core or soul—and the essence of all beings. Therefore, the more we travel inside

Figure 3. Correlative Constellation of Interrelations Between Central Ego Functions and the Components of Experience



Notes: Connecting lines indicate a correlation between elements of the interrelation between central ego functions and experience. The characteristics of “perezhivanie”: 1. Energy—the energy component of “perezhivanie”; 2. Information—the informational component of “perezhivanie”; 3. Space—the spatial component of “perezhivanie”; 4. Time—the temporal component of “perezhivanie”. Ego-Functions: 5. constructive aggression; 6. deficiency narcissism; 7. deficiency sexuality; 8. destructive fear; 9. destructive inner ego boundaries; 10. destructive outer ego boundaries; 11. deficiency outer ego boundaries.

ourselves, in order to open our essence or wholeness, the more we discover our connection with the outer world. The inner and the outer become one” (Rogers, 1993, p. 138 [retranslated from the Russian]).

According to our experimental research, the system of psychological

defenses serves as just such a mechanism for suppressing the inner self and alienating it from the outer self.

Anna Freud gave one of the first definitions of psychological defenses. She saw them as the activity of ego that begins when the ego is in a position of extreme attack by drives and affects that pose danger to it. According to this researcher, ego defense mechanisms represent perceptual, intellectual, and motor automatisms arising as a result of early interpersonal conflicts (Kamenskaia, 2004).

Analysis of ideas about psychological defenses suggests two important conclusions. The first is that psychological defenses are the unconscious experience of previous emotionally charged relationships. The second is that they are experience featuring emotional-motor automatisms. Georgii Ivanovich Gurdzhiev (Gurdjieff) wrote about how human behaviors are conditioned by such automatisms:

Man is a machine. All of his strivings, actions, words, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and habits are the results of outside influences. Man is not capable of producing a single thought or action himself. Everything that he says, does, thinks, feels—all of that happens to him. . . . Man is born, dies, builds houses, writes books not the way he wants to, but the way it all happens. Everything happens. Man does not love, does not hate, does not desire—all that happens to him. (Speeth, 1989, pp. 32–33)

The following question thus arises: why does the social System, society, create and cultivate individuals disconnected from their own selfhood (essence)? The answer to this question demands its own research. According to V.G. Kamenskaia the concept of “psychological defenses” can be ascribed only to people from Western culture, whose social systems have a number of unique features, including the mass media. Starting at an early age, every single well-adapted person undergoes a pedagogical process of socialization that consists of the formation of a set of socially accepted social roles. Those who have not successfully advanced through the stages of socialization go on to exhibit various signs of social maladjustment and to a certain degree are rejected by society. From the perspective of the psychology of defensive behavior, social adaptation emerges as a result of the normal functioning of psychological defenses, and any forms of maladjustment are associated with abnormal functioning of the ego defense mechanisms. In the final analysis, psychological defenses serve the goals of social adaptation, the adaptation and adjustment of every person to his unique features, weaknesses, and abilities, to the demands of his immediate and more removed social surroundings (Kamenskaia, 2004).

This implies that the most important function of people’s psychological defenses in the context of social consciousness, being, and functioning is the

normalization of social relationships and interactions, the preservations of social traditions—but with a loss of contact with their own nature, purpose, mission—and their manifestation as “biosocial robots,” “ants,” successfully carrying out their functions and roles.

In instances where these social roles are hard to fulfill because they conflict with deep-seated impulses, strivings, and natural and original inclinations of which we are not well aware, psychological defenses are activated. And these defenses against one’s own nature, against natural desires, which are often truly infantile, poorly controlled, and weakly regulated in character, as a result of those same defense mechanisms fetter the natural principle at an early age and do not allow it to mature, develop, and grow.

An analogy can be drawn with human consciousness. While man has the natural born ability of conscious activity, on the reflective plane, far from everyone develops it. Well-developed reflective awareness is a product of education and the cultural traditions of the social milieu. An extreme form of the development of consciousness outside of human culture can be seen in the example of the Mowgli effect, whereby children deprived of human upbringing during the first years of life are never capable of subsequently becoming full-fledged members of society. And in this same way, the selfhood of man (his central Ego, his essence) does not develop without special nurturing and cultural traditions. Instead it “gets stuck” at the developmental level of a child. Therefore, these days one rarely encounters a mature, adult, responsible, creative, self-aware person who knows what he wants.

Let us turn to our study of the ego defense mechanisms and individual experience. To study the influence of ego defense mechanisms we used the Plutchik–Kellerman–Conte questionnaire (Kamenskaia, 2004), as well as the “perezhivanie” test. The experiment was conducted on the same group of subjects. It was found that ego defense mechanisms influence the energetic and spatiotemporal characteristics of a person’s emotions, mostly lowering their intensity, and in so doing slow the development of central ego-functions and form rigid, harsh self-concepts that often did not correspond to reality. The energy characteristic of “perezhivanie” was subject to the greatest influence, regulation, and correction by ego defense mechanisms.

The study results can be summed up in the following conclusions:

1. Individual “perezhivanie” is associated with “core” structures of the mind, its selfhood, and also with higher forms of reflective consciousness. Such dichotomous relations reveal a spiritual aspect of “perezhivanie” by means of which a person’s individuation is achieved, his becoming, self-realization and self-discovery of the outer limits of his being.
2. Social education controls this process by forming an ego defense

system that blocks the path of irrational interaction between a person's reflective and "perezhivanie" sides, which leads to the suspension of personal growth, rigidity, and a loss of connection to the self, as a result of which there is a sense of emptiness, futility, and estrangement of the individual's being.

3. The nature of "perezhivanie," the particular process of "perezhivanie," its qualitative characteristics can reflect the state of the individual's inner self, his formedness, the extent of his maturity, and the state of the borders of self.

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